When you go to London

by

H. V. Morton

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When you go to London

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WHEN YOU GO TO LONDON

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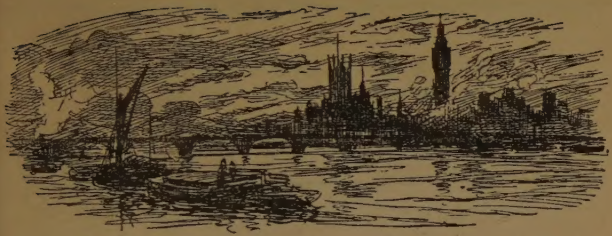
IN WHICH ARE SET OUT FOR THE FIRST TIME THINGS NO GUIDE-BOOK TELLS: THE ANNUAL PROCESSION OF LONDON LIFE FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE FINE COMEDY OF SOCIAL CUSTOM AND THE SOLEMN PAGEANT OF TRADITION

DECORATED FROM A LONDON SKETCH BOOK
BY
E. A. HORNE



WHEN YOU GO TO LONDON

DISCARDED

By H. V. MORTON

AUTHOR OF "THE HEART OF LONDON," "THE SPELL OF LONDON," "THE NIGHTS OF LONDON," ETC., ETC.

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
1927

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IN THE U. S. A. ∽ *FIRST EDITION* ∽ D-B

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TO
ALL THOSE KNOWING AMERICANS
WHO PREFER LONDON
TO PARIS.

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BEFORE YOU GO TO LONDON

I NEARLY called this book an anti-guide book. In unscrupulous moments I wish I had, but it would have been merely one more of those profitable half truths which sell tooth paste and soap. This book is really an experiment in atmosphere: you will either like it or loathe it—which will be a cheap way of finding out whether you should go to London or save your money and stay at home! In any case you will admit, I hope, that the idea underlying it, whether successfully carried out or not, has something to be said for it.

This is the idea: a stranger in any of the world's greatest cities remains a stranger for years, sometimes for ever. He lives in a hotel eating French food served by Italian waiters, and if his memory deserted him his surroundings would not tell him whether he was in Rome, Paris, Vienna or London. He is carefully insulated from the national life; he is aware that something is going on round him which he never quite understands because he is not in the

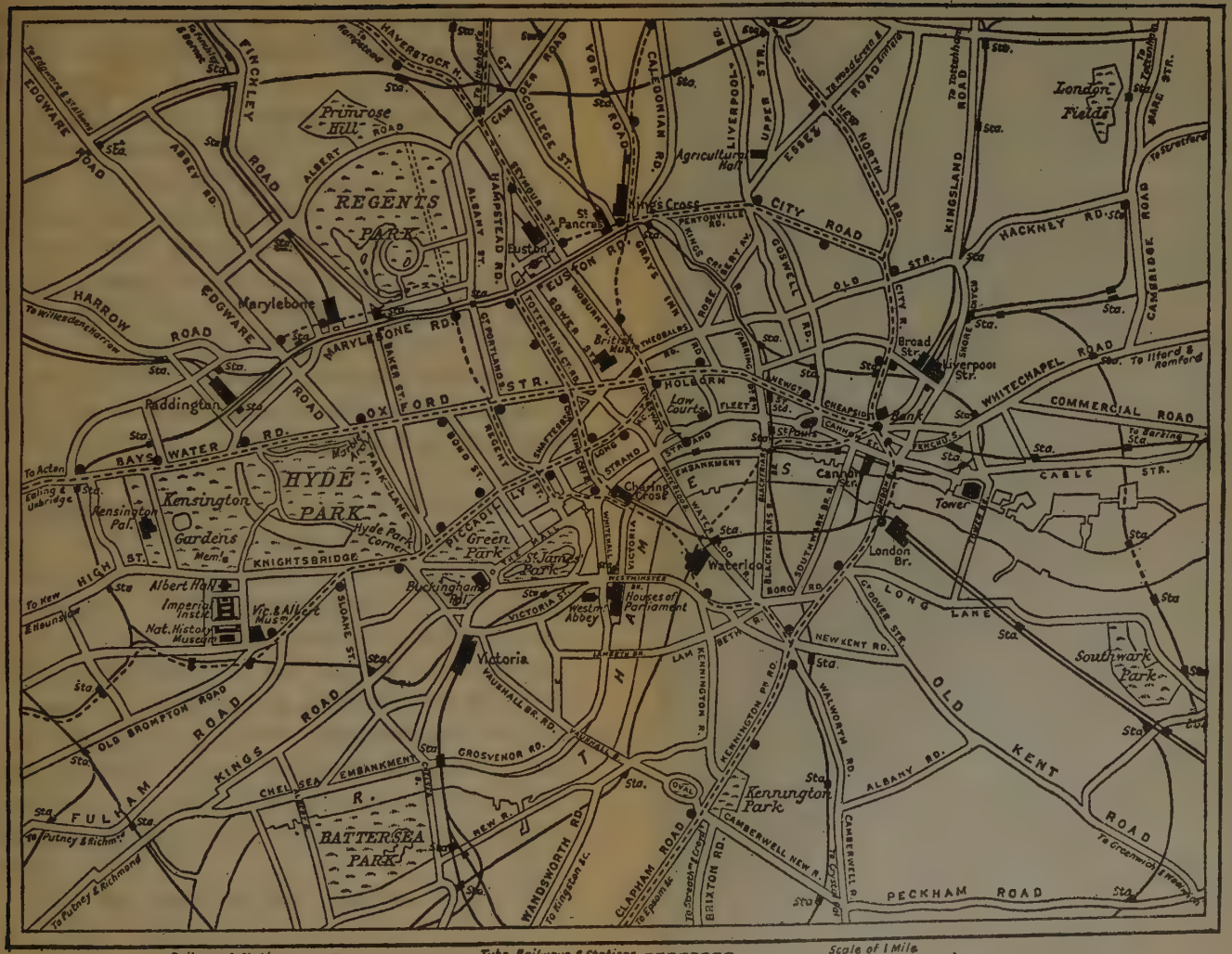
secret: he is always on the outside. In London he becomes aware one day of national excitement. Every man is wearing a silk hat: the hotel is full of race glasses! He asks his friend, the head waiter, what it is all about: "Ah, monsieur, eet ees Ascot!" He thanks him and goes off to find Washington's bust in St. Paul's.

How can he know that he is missing one of the most amusing pageants in the English year? How can he know that he can take a train to Ascot Heath and, without paying a farthing, watch the King and Queen of England drive up the course to the Royal Enclosure where all Society waits to greet them? These things are not in the guide books. Such works lead him only to the cemetery of a city's past. A city is a live thing. It throbs with vitality every moment of the day and night; it changes its expression every week; it wears as many moods as a highly-strung woman.

I have written this book, therefore, in an attempt to break down those barriers which are never broken down for the stranger. I have tried to take you as an imaginary friend under the skin of London. I have ventured to show you the living London month by month for a year.

London is perhaps the most difficult city in

A MAP OF CENTRAL LONDON



the world to know. She wears, at first sight, a face as grimly reserved as that of a well-bred Englishman. In other words, the masculine of Paris is London. I merely call London "she" because it sounds better.

No introductions are necessary to Paris: she perches on the arm of your chair and asks you to buy her a Martini. London, on the other hand, stands aloof, embarrassing you by no overtures. That, of course, is typically English. The difference between the two cities is the difference between a cocotte and a friend. If you care to break through the crust of apparent indifference which conceals London's real expression you discover a city of surprises. Foreigners who do not freeze to death during their first year's residence in London rarely want to go home again. A deceptive city: its gaiety, its light-heartedness, its frequent touches of pure childishness—this last a large and lovable factor in the English temperament —come as an unfailing astonishment to those who after gazing at the enigmatic face of the city discover, when London's friendship has been won, so much to depend on and to admire beneath the protective armor of a rather solemn mask.

Now the heart of the London Year, with

which a large portion of this book is naturally concerned, is called "the Season." It lasts generally from May 1 to about July 10: a brief dance of wealth and fashion which revolves round the Court. During this time the Royal Standard flies over Buckingham Palace, a sign that the King and Queen are in residence. Town houses are opened; Society presents its daughters at Court, attends race meetings, garden parties, horse shows, and various well-known sporting fixtures all of which are open to the public; some of which, like the Derby, are national festivals.

English life is a conventionalized affair, invented and patented in the past. The famous fixtures of the Season do not vary from year to year: they were "tried out" centuries ago and found good; so they go on unchanged.

The history of the London Season has never, so far as I know, been written, therefore it may be interesting briefly to trace its origin and development.

The West End of London with its fashionable squares was not built until within comparatively recent times. Four hundred years ago London was a walled city on a hill connected to Westminster by a lane of noblemen's palaces situated on the Strand, or shore of the Thames.

London burst its boundaries in the Stuart period. Houses were laid out in the west. Still there was no London "Season" because aristocracy was scattered on its estates throughout the country and the royal palace at Westminster housed a small court circle which was too busy trying to keep the King on the throne to indulge in social gaiety.

We hear first of an attempted "Season" in the reign of Charles I (1625-1649) when certain women bored with country life took houses in London and delighted to loiter in Hyde Park dressed in the latest mode while their husbands frequented the theatres of Southwark. These pioneers were years ahead of their times: they were sent home ignominiously by royal proclamation! It must be understood that in those days the landed aristocracy were the unpaid officials of the realm and country life was regarded as a profession; as indeed it was! The gay sparks who forsook their country seats for the doubtful joys of London were regarded by Charles as a band of slackers! "Back to your manor houses and look after your people," was the welcome London gave her first social aspirants!

By the end of the century, however, social and industrial changes removed the prohibition.

London's West End was growing rapidly. It was the haunt of our immoral, hard-drinking, hard-swearing, periwigged ancestors, most of whom, living as they did in this little village of Mayfair near London, knew each other and shared the same vices.

From 1714 onwards society continued to pour itself into the stately mould of the West End. From this massing together of wealth and fashion we have inherited gout and the London Season; from the gaiety of those days, the balls, the routs, the race meetings, the delightful mixture of town gallant with country squire, has crystallized this annual getting together of people in the same set. Like so much that is important in English life it just happens because it has been happening beyond the memory of living man. Did not great-great-grandfather drive his coach to Ascot Races? That perhaps is why these things are never advertised—the assumption is that everyone knows.

It is characteristic of England that the amusements of the aristocracy should have been heartily approved by the democracy. Nothing is more warming to the heart of a true Englishman than the sight of a lord having a good time. The Derby, which began in 1780 fol-

lowing a dinner-table discussion at a nobleman's country place, has become a great national festival; Ascot Races which date from the days of Queen Anne, attract not only the King and all Society, but also the East End of London and the suburbs! No one can possibly understand England till he has stood on the free side of Ascot Heath listening to the admiration which democracy hands out to aristocracy. It is sheer waste of money for Bolshevik agitators to embark on propaganda work in England until they have grasped this curious fact and have decided to face it!

So much for the origin of the London Season.

The visitor who desires to draw a little closer to the realities of living London will come into contact with an ordered society whose rigid code of etiquette was patented years ago and found serviceable. He may feel inclined at times to smile at what to his unaccustomed eyes seems like mummery: the tremendous importance of Court etiquette, the daily pageant of guard mounting, the Lord Mayor going in state through London in a six-horse coach driven by a fat man in a white wig, His Majesty's judges in scarlet and black . . . and so on.

But think! I have found no visitors more

receptive than Americans to the underlying memory behind these outward shows, once they have been explained. Such things are not done merely to satisfy some childish love of display: they are part of an undiscussed but well understood national pride in the past: they also, it seems to me, prove a faith in the future. We inherit from a long line of forefathers our traditions, our independence, our constitution; and we in our turn will hand these down to be guarded to the last letter by our descendants.

Is it play-acting when the King stops his coach at Temple Bar, the site of one of London's gates, and waits for the Lord Mayor of London to offer him the keys of London? It is not. It is a reaffirmation of a privilege won by the citizens of London in past ages and jealously guarded by them through wild and bloody centuries. Since Norman times the Lord Mayor has ruled in the City. No man but the king has ever been able to precede him within the confines of the old Roman wall that once surrounded the square mile where London began. This authority exists to-day. Even the Prince of Wales walks behind the Lord Mayor within the city; the point of the City's sword is carried point up within the jurisdiction of the City before all men but the King.

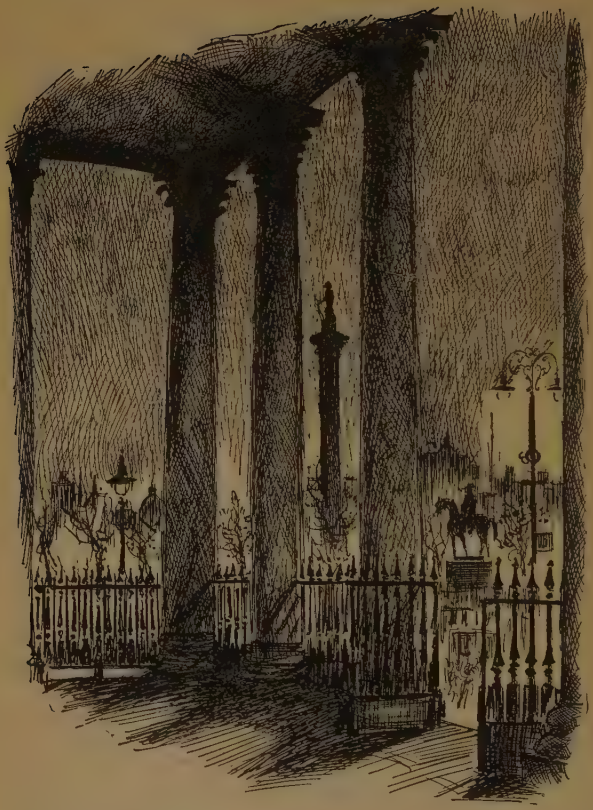
In these old customs we see the ghost of ancient battles: old struggles which are the very source of London's strength. In their observance we keep faith with the past and point a moral to the future . . . .

This also is a side of London I will show you. Keep your guide book if it will help you to understand London's history, but remember that monuments and a Georgian chop house are only a fraction of London's interest. The life of London founded on centuries of living flows on around you, a crazy puzzle of teeming men and women: a puzzle that can form itself into an ordered picture in your mind only when you know something of their motives and their point of view.

Thus month by month I offer you the key to the Freedom of London, an honor reserved for the friends of London and for unusually distinguished visitors. I hope it will unlock that door which is so often closed to the stranger.

LONDON.
March, 1927.

JANUARY: *You enter the London Year—it is cold—it is wet—but there are gulls on the Embankment.*



THE NELSON COLUMN, FROM ST. MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS

JANUARY

I

YOU are in London for a whole year with nothing to do and with enough money to do anything. Imagine that. You will wander in a haphazard way through twelve months gathering impressions of scenes and ceremonies, places and people. When you feel like it you will follow the crowd; when the mood takes you you will slip off alone to watch Cynthia swaying against a punt pole somewhere on the Thames.

You will go, of course, to the Derby, to Ascot, to the Royal Tournament, to Lord's Cricket ground, to the incredible tea-parties of dear Lady Maud; you will linger over the rails of the Row in Hyde Park on gold May mornings, and, at the correct time, you will obey the Lord Chamberlain's gilt-edged command to meet the King in his garden at Buckingham Palace.

When other people with your imaginary leisure have left London in mid-July to bore themselves politely with golf in Scotland or with polo and tennis in northern France, you will

have a delicious time climbing to the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral with men from the Middle West whose lovely daughters inspire the world's best magazine covers. You will go to the Tower of London, where you will exchange "bromides" with natives of New York, Manchester, Chicago and Edinburgh. If it is hot in August, as it sometimes is, you will visit the Zoo Aquarium to envy those cold fish with gold-rimmed eyes; to watch in cool delight the frigid ballet of the accordion-pleated lemon soles. In rich autumnal afternoons you will observe poor families who never leave London from year end to year end taking a cricketing holiday on the overworked grass of Hyde Park. You will, in short, drift, or wander idly, through a London year.

However, before you will go to Court, before you will breakfast in Kensington Gardens, before you will lie in a punt on the Thames at Henley watching that thin gold bracelet slip up and down a bare arm as Cynthia swings the pole, you must endure January, February and March. This is not nice for you; but it is inevitable.

London earns spring, she heartily deserves summer, and, although it is good now and then to cheat the calendar and fly south to the

mimosa, returning in April when the London year has thrashed its way through the mumps and measles of adolescence, you do not in this way enjoy to the full, as a Londoner should, the first green leaf that brings its message of hope to the grayness of Piccadilly. It is only by trial and tribulation that joys are cast into relief; therefore with the grim resolve to see you on your knees before a May morning I intend to drag you through the rains of January, the belated snows of February and the tearing winds of March.

To the lover of London no month can be dull. It may be unpleasant but it cannot be devoid of its own peculiar pointfulness. The rain of January is part of the London pageant. The cold winds that sweep the city; the damp mists; the dripping nights; the cheerless, chill dawns, with a blown-out storm exhausted in a sullen sky—help us to place London in its true geographical position in northern seas. How much London owes to January is a fruitful, but unexplored, subject. When the discovery of the Americas gave England a sudden strategical importance as the Venice of a new commercial era, how vastly different might have been our subsequent history had London, de-

energized by sun, enjoyed the climate of a Barcelona!

She has been baptized in rain, her character forged in fog. It may even be that January, February and March are the most important factors in her development! Men who, grimly to this day resisting the softness of centralized heat, have century after century cheerfully endured the London winter were obviously hoarded by Destiny for some great thing. . . .

Now, your mackintosh! January waits. . . .

II

Rain. . . .

A damp newspaper boy runs down the Strand with a soggy contents bill: "Liner's S.O.S. in Atlantic." London, head down, buffets this same Atlantic gale. The wind comes in great gusts; the oblique rain falls with magnificent enthusiasm.

In most cities rain is a temporary unpleasantness and seems no other: in London the rains of January achieve a grim effect of permanence. As you go on through the deluge over glassy pavements you wonder if it will ever cease; if it can be true that above the low-hung

grayness the sun that shines on Africa is gold and warm. Along the Strand moves the wet, sad traffic: carters crouched above damp horses, their heads in shawls of sacking; omnibus drivers with the water glistening on their tingling cheeks; taxicab drivers who say, as

they excavate change from the remote undergarment in which they all secrete it:

"Blinkin' awful, ain't it, sir? Lots more to come down, too!"

Lots more; oceans more!

In the shop doorway where hurriedly you seek safety from a sudden passionate outburst is a young girl whose yellow stockings are black with rain to the knee. She lifts a *papier mâché* shoe and ruefully regards the damage of a

January afternoon. Next to her a young man shakes a thin rivulet of water from the brim of a shapeless felt hat. The rain falls, making water pennies in the roadway which you watch in miserable fascination as they fall and vanish. . . .

High above the City, St. Paul's Cathedral lifts its Georgian solemnity in a white mist, remote in melancholy. The mist of rain almost hides it: it becomes a thin, looming ghost of itself. The Thames at Blackfriars Bridge is a river of tragic grandeur: a great subject for a toneless study in grey. The rain makes millions of tiny prickings on the surface of the oily, grey water; and far off, like a castle in a dream, the white frontage of Somerset House reminds you that the rains of January wash the windward side of our Portland Stone—that beautiful hard limestone from the south of England—giving to London that splendid silver greyness against black which is her characteristic glory. . . .

Half-past four! Tea time is the best thing in all London during January: not the rich camp-fire brews which typists concoct with electric kettles in the City of London, but tea at home before an open fire in a room growing dark: a room whose charm and warmth are ac-

centuated by the fury of that which whistles past the window pane. Happy the man who loves his wife in January, who can rush romantically home in the lash of a storm and achieve a queer little thrill on being asked a foolish question:

"Darling, are you *very* wet?"

A month for honeymoons, because rain seems to underline the beauties of domestic life. How good it is to see the firelight glitter on a Queen Anne tea service, pulling sudden lights from hidden corners, playing games in the shadows.

In no other city on earth does the toasting of a muffin, or the equally indigestible crumpet, attain an almost religious beauty, as though a man were on his knees with an offering to the spirit of fire and shelter. On the windows the raindrops chase each other, over the chimneys dances the mad Atlantic wind, and the mind expands as it expands in a mustard bath after a wet run to hounds. (No; don't switch the lights on; let the flames flicker over the ceiling!)

If at such a moment you can admire the firelight on a pair of shining silk knees, and discover yourself restrained only by buttered fingers from stroking a neck or patting a cheek, it may seem to you that January in London is one of the most glorious months in the twelve.

III

ONE of the most agreeable things about a London January, is that to-morrow may always seem to have been borrowed from March, and occasionally, May!

We have such days in January—surprising studies in atmosphere; days of chill mist that would make any other city in Europe a hideous mass of looming brick and stone. London, however, always has something in reserve. That is the secret of her charm. Other cities are obvious—they go out boldly after their lovers, while London just waits to be loved. When you think that she has exhausted all her beauty she, most surprisingly, slips a new charm over you, leaving you enchanted and amazed.

You will on such a day go down to the Thames Embankment and watch a short half-hour of glory fade into a depressing afternoon.

This half-hour—how can I describe it? The sun, small and the color of a tangerine, hangs over Blackfriars Bridge in an enormous haze of red-gold mist. The river is high, lapping the stone. To the left the great arc of the bridge spans the stream and throbs with traffic, with slow-moving tramcars; to the right the Em-

bankment swings round in a delicious curve into white mist. Waterloo Bridge appears to be cut out of brown paper and stuck against the pale sky. Topping the mist at points along the way to Charing Cross are spires and minarets—the Savoy, the Cecil, the Inland Revenue Office—that on clear days are merely ordinary buildings connected with American visitors and the income tax.

Then there are gulls, lovely white, wheeling birds from the sea. They fly in a gold haze, shrilly crying, falling to the water, their little orange-colored feet down, then up in the air again, their feet tucked back against their soft bodies, gliding this way and that, now above, now below their fellows, marvelously expert and sure in movement and grace.

A little boy, an old man and a young woman at various points along the Embankment are always feeding the birds with bread thrown from paper bags. Wherever you go in London there are people who look as though they could not feed themselves but always they have food for birds.

You will talk to the old man as he feeds the gulls. Yes, he will say, he often comes to "his" gulls—at least when his rheumatics allow him. He knows many of them by sight, so he will

inform you. When really cold weather comes he will have the happiness of seeing them feed from his hands.

"And there's not many who feed gulls that can say that," he will remark proudly, "for they're queer, unaccountable things, as skittish and shy and curious as women."

You will look at him closely and realize that he is indeed old.

A white squadron wheels around him, almost snatching the bread from his gnarled hand. Suddenly a large gull swoops into the fray with the assurance of the strong, and tears the food from under the tawny beak of a smaller bird. A shrill protest, a swift change in the pattern of the flight, a slight wheel out towards the river, and a return to the parapet of the Embankment.

"Ah, wicked!" the old man says; "wicked that was! Just like human beings, aren't they? . . . greedy, cruel!"

Then he will take elaborate pains to favor the smaller gulls, throwing his bread with discretion, making the birds catch it in mid with a pretty upward move of strong wings .... a sudden flinging down of tucked-up legs.

He throws away his paper bag. The food is gone! The gulls know; and so they leave him

with the callous cruelty of unthinking, wild things. They cannot feel, as you do, that he loved them, their struggle, the sound of their wings; that there was something in his eyes when he fed them that tells you how much he would like to gain their complete confidence, and, perhaps, like another St. Francis, talk to them in a London mist.

FEBRUARY: *There is snow—the King opens his Parliament.*

THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

FEBRUARY

I

THERE comes a day, often in February, when you awaken to a strange Sundayish stillness. What day is it? you ask yourself. Surely it is Wednesday? Then why on earth . . .

You part the curtains and see that the trees in the square are puffed up with snow, the roads are white, the iron railings are tipped with whiteness an inch high. A white fox terrier crossing the road seems a dirty yellowish color. You stand for a moment entranced. It is so still: so silent, stationary as those little snowscapes imprisoned in glass globes which they sell in the Rue de Rivoli and in Bournemouth. It must have fallen overnight. You take down your Robert Bridges for the pleasure of seeing snowflakes fall in words:

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town . . .

The "unaccustomed brightness" is so strange. If your bedroom curtains are of a light material which permits the invasion of the dawn you will have awakened earlier and will have seen the white wonder before the postman placed his Crusoe feet upon it and led the way to mire.

You feel a childish desire to be out in it; to see London in ermine; to smile with delight at our solemn heroes on plinths on whom the snow visits such indignities. The first soft crunchings of your feet are a delight to you; it is fun to see how the drifts have been chased halfway up into corners by the wind; it is good to watch a breath of wind displace a puff of snow from a burdened branch; and it is delicious to look back and see your own footsteps.

In the Buckingham Palace Road you meet a company of coated footguards marching to Chelsea. Very Russian! And when you reach the Horse Guards Parade it is a little London Kremlin, dome and all.

At Charing Cross you meet the horror of slush. The roads are awash in something that looks, and feels, like a brown water ice. As the day advances the wheels turn it into iced cocoa, and it is very horrid.

All over London the stone men and the

bronze men are holding handfuls of snow most dramatically. Oratorical gestures are ruined by the snow; the reverenced heads of soldiers, sailors, prime ministers and poets wear ridiculous little hats of it.

St. Paul's has the ability of withdrawing itself into some remote region of thoughtful mist. It would seem that the snow of Ludgate Hill has formed a thin vapor which has wrapped itself round the cathedral. The roofs are white; the Portland stone spires are dark against this sharpness: London is a queer, foreign city under a dark, heavy sky.

In the evening more snow falls. You will go through the streets and find them powdered, the flakes falling and seeming to rise up steamily from the earth in the mellow radiance of the lamps. Flickering, dancing, this way and that way, they come, cold for a second on your face, soft, soundless, making London supremely beautiful for—one short hour in the early morning!

II

YOU will come to the House of Lords to see the most perfect ceremony in the world—the State Opening of Parliament. The streets are

crowded. Over the heads of the people are the black bearskins of the Guards. There is a sound of military music and the swish of men flinging red sand over the road. That amazing Cockney-Elizabethan ripeness of temper flashes up from the people from time to time as they beguile the waiting hour by scrutinizing every passing motor car. An aged peer goes stiffly by borne down by a weight of glittering honor; and beside him his lady wrapped in ermine.

"Gi'e us a smile, grandpa!" cries the lonely humorist of a crowd amid approving laughter. "Is that your old woman, her what's wearing everything but the fireguard? You've had a hard life, old boy, haven't you? . . ."

A Guard's subaltern removes a fringe of blown bearskin from his eyes with a white glove and turns to find the commentator.

"I can see you, you little rogue!" comes the Voice. "I can see you under that new 'at o' yourn!"

I wonder if London crowds always behaved like this: did that inevitable London voice ring out when the City waited on Henry V after Agincourt? I expect so: it seems part and parcel of the English temper, this friendly chaff. If anyone cried "Down with the King!" I know

well that the man with the funny voice would be the first to try to land the disloyalist a cut under the jaw. I have seen it happen!

At the corner of Horse Guards Avenue the mounted band of the 1st Life Guards is playing a cheerful fox trot: such a sweet mellow band with plenty of tum-tumming from the saddle drums that bulge on either side of the plump, piebald drum horse. The bands sits its white horses; the drummer puts in a lot of jazz work; the bandmaster waves his baton and there is a syncopated crash. The horses look mildly outraged!

"Put on another record, guv'nor!" cries the Voice from the Crowd. . . .

You approach the House of Lords between two lines of waiting troops. Parliament Square is an immense loneliness with its black throng held back by the single line of scarlet. At the doorway you are scrutinized; your ticket is examined as though it might be a faked banknote. They cannot be too careful. Now and then they make mistakes. Not so long ago a little bent man carrying an ancient bag arrived at the House of Lords on the morning of the Opening of Parliament and the suspicious eye of the sergeant fell upon him, so he was stopped

and the police, gathering round, asked in one voice for his pass.

"Pass?" asked the stranger. "And why do I need a pass?"

"Afraid I can't let you in without one," said the sergeant, with a baleful eye on the bag.

The little old man dropped the bag and fumbled for a card. Then all the police saluted shyly.

"I carry my damned robes and things in this," said the little man picking up his bag. "I hate show!"

The peer passed. I would tell you his ancient name, but he might not like it.

But come; the thing to do is to find your seat and hold it against all comers. If you have never seen the House of Lords your breath will be taken away, for as soon as you enter and look over the gallery to the floor of the Upper Chamber it seems that Time has flung you down a few centuries into some ancient magnificence.

How leisured, how rich, how mellow it is! The lights are not lit and the daylight, falling through stained glass, gently illuminates the assembly of the peers. They come in by ones and twos in long flowing robes of scarlet and ermine: duke, marquess, earl, viscount and baron. You run over their titles and dwell a

little longer on those whose names appear in Shakespeare. Immediately before the two vacant gold thrones under the carved canopy at the extremity of the chamber is the Woolsack, that ample backless seat where mass the judges in ermine cloaks and full, flowing wigs, brindle colored, masses of tight curls; to the right sit the white-robed bishops and to the left the ambassadors to the Court of St. James's in gold-laced coats and colored sashes, their breasts brilliant with foreign orders. A whisper runs through the House of Lords. Through the open doors at the end of the Chamber stand the Gentlemen of the Bodyguard leaning on tall halberds, the light glittering on gold helmet and steel corselet and pike point. Their tasseled halberds are grasped by hands in big white gauntlets.

But look at the galleries! There sit the peeresses in Court dress: white shoulders, arms in white kid gloves, round white throats a misty shimmer of pearls and in hair the fire of diamonds. They wear cloaks of sable and ermine. As they move little swift darts of color spring from their jewels.

The great hall fills to the brim. The peers take their seats. Conversation ceases. A certain tenseness is betrayed by the officials, who

can be seen through the open doors at the end of the hall. There comes into the chamber the sound of distant cheering. The climax to this amazing scene is approaching. From the Robing Room comes the Prince of Wales. In his State robes he looks like a fifteenth-century portrait. He bows to the empty throne and takes his place beside it. It is now very quiet in the House of Lords. The suspicion you may have harbored that these mediæval knights in their ermine were telling each other amusing stories is set at rest. They sit stiffly waiting for the coming of the King.

Listen! Far down Whitehall they are playing the National Anthem. Something of the excitement of the thousands outside enters the hall. Outside there is a rattle of rifle butts, the sound of commands. . . . The big gold coach drawn by eight stallions and guarded on either side by Yeomen must be trundling to the gate.

Boom! In Hyde Park a battery of Royal Horse Artillery begins the salute of twenty-one guns. The first salvo shakes the windows ever so slightly and loses itself in the tense air of the House of Lords. It is the signal that their Majesties have arrived! They are being met beneath the Victoria Tower of the Palace of

Westminster by the Great Officers of State whose names read like a fanfare from the fields of chivalry: Bluemantle Pursuivant, Rouge Croix Pursuivant, Windsor Herald, Richmond Herald, Chester Herald, York Herald, Norroy King of Arms, Clarenceux King of Arms, the Lord Privy Seal, the Lord High Chancellor,

Garter Principal King of Arms, the Deputy Earl Marshal, the Lord Great Chamberlain. So they go up the grand staircase to the Robing Rooms, followed by pages, ladies of the bedchamber and the high officials of His Majesty's household, immediately before them, carried by earls, go the Sword of State and the Cap of Maintenance.

There is a long wait. The Crown Jewels, the

ancient symbols of the kingship, are being brought to their Majesties. The King is robing as a Knight of the Garter; the great crimson cloak with the ermine cape is being brought to him, the sceptre, the Crown.

Suddenly through the hushed hall sounds a fanfare of trumpets, and at the sound of the trumpets every light in the House of Lords springs into life. It is an amazing moment! A ring of fire leaps up in the galleries and stays flickering over the heads of the peeresses; below in the great hall, the scarlet robes take on an added richness, and, precisely at this moment, through the doors at the end of the chamber step the King and the Queen.

With a rustle the peers and the peeresses rise and bow. You have a vision of heralds in quartered tunics and great thigh boots bowing low, forming a lane through which passes this brilliant coming to life of English history . . . the King and the Queen wearing their crowns, hand in hand, moving silently and slowly to their thrones, young pages bearing their trains, little Court swords sticking up through the slits in brocade coats, little neat legs in white silk stockings. The pages swiftly drape the trains. Their Majesties sit upon the gold thrones. The Heralds group themselves on either side. The

Lord Great Chamberlain sends the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to summon "the faithful Commons."

You stand watching, trying to sort it out, trying to find words to express the feeling that here is summed up in one great wave of color, one splendid pageant, something sacred at the heart of the nation, something which it is almost sacrilege for a foreigner to see because he might so easily misunderstand. It is the same "something" that drew the caps from the heads of the crowd outside when the big gold coach went by, something that caught in the throat, something that slips through a net of words. It is something old and English that is renewing itself in this pageant, something that seems to say that yesterday and to-day are linked and one in the reality of race. It is the kind of feeling that would assail a man if all his family portraits came suddenly to life and he could speak with the dead from whose loins he sprang. . . .

Down below at the Bar of the House of Lords is a furtive shuffle as the "faithful Commons" gather to hear the speech of the King.

The King rises.

"My relations with Foreign Powers continue to be friendly . . . my Government . . . my

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs . . . my Army . . . my Navy . . . my Empire . . ."

He goes on dealing with current problems in archaic language, and that queer feeling comes again. This is very old, and just as it should be! It touches something near the roots: it is so dignified, so assured, so beyond every suspicion of mummery, so splendid to be part of. . . .

The voice ceases. There is another rustle of bows. The trumpets call again. It is over!

The diamonds glitter above the blue Riband of the Garter on the Queen's breast; the King turns and offers his hand; the little pages with their slantwise swords pick up the heavy trains; and their Majesties, hand in hand as they came, leave the hall in silence. Parliament is opened. . . .

Outside in Palace yard the Yeomen of the Guard in scarlet and gold range themselves, as is their ancient right, on either side the Coronation Coach. The sovereign's escort mounts, the Color in their centre, the grooms in white wigs and knee breeches and pink coats lead round the eight black stallions and the giant gold wheels crunch the gravel.

The King comes, then the Queen.

With a great crash of drums the waiting

band plays the Anthem, the Colors of the Foot Guards dip—Vittoria, Inkerman, Waterloo, Sebastopol gold letters in the dust—and from the waiting crowds rises a dull mutter of cheering; and in their hearts is something that utterly defies analysis.

MARCH: *You eat and feel better for it — you see the Spring Fashions—and the Boat Race.*

THE CLOISTERS, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

MARCH

I

WHEN the lights of London wink and tremble against the windy sky of March you meet M. Panache at the hour of dinner. He is paid, I think, £2,000 a year to be smooth to people who are, or are not, as the case may be, hungry.

He is always leaning towards a lord, or advising an actress to eat snipe in season. When he sees you he gives a delighted start and moves towards you as if you too were a lord, which shows how well he was brought up. You know in your heart that he cannot be as delighted to see you as he pretends (no one could), but he has that magnetic persuasion (which explains his £2,000 a year) capable of deceiving you into the temporary belief that you are the one person on earth for whom he has been watching all day. He is, of course, French, and his evening dress perhaps a trifle too perfect.

"Ah," he says. "Good evening!"

Not a remarkable greeting. Yet, somehow,

from the mouth of M. Panache, "Ah, good evening!" sounds just like:

"Once again, sir, are we flattered by your brilliant presence, you who walk in radiance, who shed happiness wherever you may go. Thank you!"

At his back lurk various waiters in every stage of Latin watchfulness, ready at the slightest provocation to leap forward with an unnecessary match.

He gives you a faint feeling of royalty, for everybody is looking at you. So smooth he is. I think he was weaned on furniture cream, for as he goes away you feel that you have been well polished.

There comes a day when M. Panache earns his money.

You are sad. You have the vague depression that comes with March; that awful March madness! You have eaten nothing all day and you hate the thought of food. You sink down, down, down into any abyss of self-hatred. Life is just a meaningless farce! What is the good of anything? How red-faced and fat other people are; how pleased with themselves; their loathly faces, smug and laughing, haunt you on either hand. They behave not as fearful visitors to this mysterious foothold in space,

but as if they have bought and paid for the freehold of the world. And you have nothing . . . . How the epileptic lights of Piccadilly blink and shake; how awful are the hard lips of women and the coarse lips of men. . . .

"Ah, good evening!" says M. Panache.

"It's no good, Panache, I can't eat! I only want to enjoy my misery somewhere and then creep away to die."

No surprise! No questions! M. Panache reacts automatically.

"I give you a table where no one see you, where you see—everything!" begins Panache. "You are not well. You need care. You allow me to order your dinner. Um? Yes? Of course! Then, first, I make you a little cocktail of my own composition—the Panache. Um? Yes? Good! Come with me. . . ."

The whole thing is a crazy farce, you think. Panache is a good fellow, but he doesn't understand; he thinks scarlet fever or meningitis could be cured by caviare.

"M'sieu!"

Like a priest surrounded by acolytes he comes with his cocktail. You drink to please him. He goes. You wish he would come back, for although he is objectionably happy some subtle emanation from him affects you pleasantly,

makes you think that after all you may not be such a contemptible little speck of life as you believe. That is it; he makes you pleased with yourself! His sympathy, too, is like a swimming bath; you can splash about in it.

Then you smile. You have actually laughed! Was it during the oysters, was it at the sole, was it when he insisted on choosing a half bottle of wine? You wonder! (How much in love are those two over there, the girl in the green gown and that brown-haired boy. You hope they'll be happy. How you wish everybody was happy. . . .)

And why were you recently sad? You can't quite recall. As you half close your eyes in the blue smoke of a cigar you tell yourself that life, besides being real and earnest—and all that—is a most amazing wonder; that there are things to fight and things to love and things to believe. All the color has rushed back. But how?

"Was your dinner. . .?" asks Panache, bowing.

"Excellent!"

Outside there is a comfortable surge of life, a good feel of London in the air, a stimulation even in those winking lights. "Fate cannot

harm me; I have dined to-day." Who said that? Sydney Smith probably.

"Good night," smiles M. Panache as you leave.

A strange man! In another age he might have been a magician. Perhaps the queerest thing about him is that as he said good night you felt safe and happy, just as you did as a child when your mother told you that you had not really bumped your head very hard after all. . . .

Curious!

II

OVER London now creeps the first faint promise of Spring; women talk about new clothes. . . .

The dance band stops, the drummer gives a b-r-r crash on the kettledrums, the lights go down and someone says, in one of those high, cold-storage voices: "My lords, ladies and gentlemen, M. Flair presents the new spring fashions. . . ."

B-r-r-r crash go the drums once more.

Across the dusk of the dance floor wavers an uncertain searchlight which, after blundering

foolishly over the band, giving a second's publicity to a fat man with his mouth full of *pêche Melba* and revealing the real age of a few women, discovers its quarry—a girl who meanders into the gold pool swaying her hips like a well-conducted odalisque. She is exceedingly Rue de la Paix-ish. Exceedingly! You can in imagination smell the coffee and bath salts, the scent and the warm bread which is Paris. She *is* Paris! Her complexion is due to a groundwork of queer reddish powder and her lips are unnaturally carmine, so clearly drawn, as in raw steak, that you instinctively trace out the real obliterated design of them. Her black evening dress looks as though some one had hurriedly pinned a piece of cloth on her in the bathroom, and when she turns, her back is a large, unimaginative white V. So she glides forward prettily, placing her feet delicately, step by step in the manner of the mountain goat, turning this way and that, her hands describing airy gracefulnesses in the limelight. You feel that she should sing a song, but, of course, she does not; for she is that strange thing, a live fashion plate, a mannequin from Paris.

Somewhere in the small, smart dance club—the fashionable theatre for the unveiling of the

new mode—M. Flair stands watching critically. How wonderful to be M. Flair! You look at him and wonder what it feels like to possess the power of creating a new silhouette, to be able to persuade women from Birmingham to Buenos Aires either to hide or reveal their calves. No matter how much an ordinary man is permitted

to believe he controls a woman, it is as nothing compared with the real dictatorship of M. Flair! The interesting thing is that it does not end in this smart dance club; it merely begins there and goes right down the social scale. To-day's flash of genius will be selling from the peg in High-street, Kensington, before June is old; and then, of course, M. Flair finds the ice bag

and thinks out something else. It must be rather like having a butterfly farm.

How solemn every one becomes. M. Flair looks at each creation as a ship-builder might anxiously regard his new liner as it ploughs down into the sea at its launching; the women lean forward critically, either accepting or rejecting each dress in relation to their own appearance, and the men divide their interest between the mannequins as human beings and the small change of inexpert comment, to which their partners pay slight attention.

It *is* a solemn event. As the girl walks across the floor the appearance of millions of women is being settled for them. The echo of this event will be heard in Mayfair: "Jove, you look stunning to-night!" in Kensington: "I say, that's a ripping thing you've got on!" and, in time, in Brixton, "You look an absolute winner, you do!"

So, you see, it is nothing to laugh at or to sneer at; it's Her eye M. Flair catches, and—our money! We are all in this!

Mannequin after mannequin takes the floor. Such self-assurance! No man, not even a popular actor, could endure this ordeal in cold blood, in so easy, so graceful, so unconcerned a way. But if a woman believes that she is

well dressed nothing is impossible to her. One mannequin glides in a cold melancholy, as though she had been frozen at a deathbed; another smiles vaguely as at some private joke, and all, instead of trying to be real women, create an impersonal atmosphere which leaves you with the impression that some waxen Cytherea has stepped from a shop window.

"My great aunt!" remarks Cynthia, grinding a cigarette stump in a plate. "Fancy going to a point-to-point in that!"

M. Flair does not know everything. He always brings over impossible sports clothes, the kind of thing that looks good over the rails of the Bois de Boulogne in Paris, but is as different from an Englishwoman's idea of a tweed costume as a provincial Frenchman's riding breeches are different from those worn in the Quorn country. I would take M. Flair on at this game and would beat him hollow. I would, moreover, guarantee to work up any fashion show to a condition of hysterical delight. I would get the tailors of Melton Mowbray or Edinburgh to make a few tweed costumes; and I would inhabit them with the right striding kind of English girl, and, shod in brogues, with perhaps a couple of adorable Sealyhams at heel, she would knock spots off any odalisque born!

"Tweed—tweed—why do men always love tweed?" women ask.

Perhaps if you excavated our hearts you might find that each one of us has some April memory of a windy day and a smiling girl, hair blowing, cheeks a-tingle, arms full of struggling puppies; and the clouds wheeling above the hilltop, their shadows like smoke racing across the green patchwork of an English shire. . . .

III

AND now the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race.

For weeks London has read forecasts by "Old Blues," and tiresome newspaper stories from the tow path dealing with flappers from Putney—are there still flappers?—and it now knows by heart the appearance of the light and dark blue crews. Then dawns the day of the Boat Race—the first big sporting event of the year.

You join the luncheon-time rush towards Putney. You work your way into the crowd near Barnes Bridge and there you wait.

The sky is Cambridge blue; the dark

Thames, reflecting it, is Oxford blue; the sun is actually warm on the back of your neck. Now and then there comes, most unjustly, the sharp lash of a northeast wind. By pushing your head under the brim of a vast velour hat in front (why will girls do this on race days?) you catch a glimpse of the river, broad and gently swelling, receding in the distance to that delightful curve at Corney Reach. You have seen a basket of newly picked blackberries? Both banks of the river as far as you can see look exactly as if some one has emptied millions of blackberries there. The Thames flows between two living banks.

As time goes on the pressure of the crowd at your back increases so that mysteriously, in spite of the fact that you hold your ground with fierce resolve, you begin to lose what little sight of the river you at first possessed. But it is worth it. The crowd is a joy. It is one of the most delicious crowds of the year.

In front is a man who tells his girl that he knows the Oxford cox. Next to him is a man wearing a Southern Railway workman's coat. He has a baby in his arms and owns a submerged wife somewhere to whom he shouts continuously. Sitting on the parapet are two flap-

pers, and next to them a tidy old lady in black, who is wearing a pair of white cotton gloves.

"Dare I?" says the old lady when some one who is with her pushes a cigarette case towards her.

"Oh, go on, mother!"

"Dare I?" repeats the old lady, looking coy. She pushes up her veil and does!

Suddenly the chatter stops. Down Putney way they are cheering. The Barnes crowd takes it up. Opposite in Duke's Meadows two clumsy barrels, one a dark blue, the other a light, are seen to move upwards towards the mast from which they are suspended.

"They've started!"

All eyes are glued to the barrels on the opposite bank. The light blue barrel rises above the dark. A perfect scream of delight comes from the crowd. Three shop girls, hand in hand on chairs dance with joy.

"Good old Cambridge!" they shout.

Then, far off, at the river's bend, you see something white rising and falling rhythmically. There they are! Frantic shouting is going on all round. The barrels opposite are forgotten.

"Come on, Cambridge!"

"Ox-FERD! Ox-FERD!"

How slowly they seem to move! Now and then the sun catches the water falling from the oars.

"Please do let my little boy get near the front!"

A woman with despair in her voice pulls at your coat. You take the lad and push him in front. He displaces some one and you have a clear view. (A good action rewarded!) Then the vile youth removes his cap, and a tangle of hair leaps up into the air almost a foot high, obscuring everything. You could kill him! The wind blows it about.

Then, through his hair, you see the race. . . .

Cambridge, well ahead, are tearing through the water, Oxford behind. Some expert says Oxford are "all in." You cannot tell. To you it seems that both crews are working like machines. There is an uncanny clockwork precision about them. They pass to a babel of shouting! Behind them, keeping a splendid line, surges a rank of motor launches, with cinema men turning handles, photographers frantically taking pictures, and bunches of 'Varsity men, hands in coat pockets, eyes glued on the boats ahead. . . .

A minute . . . two minutes . . . pass. And then the word "Cambridge" comes in a great

roar from Mortlake. (Sometimes it is Oxford!) At Barnes they catch the word and hurl it on to Hammersmith; at Hammersmith Bridge they send it on to Putney.

On the outskirts of the crowd an Oxford butcher's boy is rolling in the road with a light blue boy who has insulted him.

Up, Oxford! Up, Cambridge! Up, the Thames!

So London celebrates its first excitement. . . .

APRIL: *Spring comes to London—you climb the Monument—the Colonel buys a new suit.*

PUMP COURT, TEMPLE

APRIL

I

NOW the Year awakens for Spring is dancing a minuet through London. Wherever she places a toe a daffodil waves above the grass; where she pirouettes a moment the hyacinths unfold their bells, and in the wind of her flying hair the sticky chestnut buds fling back their green coats.

In Kensington Gardens you will watch middle-aged men sail model yachts. A woman will perhaps say to you, "Aren't men babies all their lives? Can you imagine grown women behaving like that?" Never! Woman is a solemn, specialized animal. She realizes her toys in life. She rehearses her destiny from her earliest years. A woman's children are her dolls come true, but no man ever played at being a chartered accountant. A man puts aside childish things and becomes a solicitor or an auctioneer. Life sidetracks us in a maddening way, and the Napoleons of the nursery floor forget their lost brigades, their horse, foot, and guns, and go sadly about the world as bishops or K.C.'s. So

you will sit in Kensington Gardens watching men play at boats, thinking how fortunate they are, how happy they look on this sharp day of yellow April.

"If," says the woman, "I were married to a man who wanted to play with yachts I should go mad."

How gloriously they take the water and fill their little sails with wind, leaning across the bosom of the Round Pond, trembling in a cross wind, veering, tacking, going on, dipping like big white birds. . . .

The men who play with boats in Kensington Gardens are instructed by their wives to put on old flannel trousers. One of them, you will notice, wears his ancient British warm. All carry bamboo poles to prod their ships out of difficult situations or to pull them to land in a heartless calm. When the yachts are launched these middle-aged men stride sternly to the other side of the pond to reclaim them, walking swiftly with a loving eye on the waters where the white sails move.

"Ridiculous!" says the woman.

You sit there feeling horribly out of it, wishing an old ex-colonel would ask you if you'd like to play. . . .

A dog walks past on good behavior behind his

master. He pauses, his forehead wrinkled in thought. What a singularly luscious duck! He looks at his master and at the duck. One sudden spring. . . . Why is that fat, foolish duck sailing about there anyway if not to be caught, or at least startled? You can see his mind working. A whistle! Off he trots with one lingering love glance. How irksome duty can be.

The duck, unaware of the obedience in the heart of a dog which has saved him considerable agitation, performs the most ridiculous act in nature. He directs his beak end downwards in the direction of grubs, leaving exposed to the sky a fluffy, triangular stern. Two orange-colored legs move humorously below water, maintaining balance. For some seconds he remains in this comic position; then, like a cork suddenly released from beneath water, up he pops. No trace of triumph on his face, no hint of lusciousness achieved: just a plain, smug duck.

Over the Round Pond wheel light clouds. A fresh wind whips the waters into a little running gale.

The maze of trees towards Hyde Park shows slight shimmerings of sharp green. One by one, and here and there, three or four in a group, the trees are brought to life at the call

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of Spring. At the back on the grass hundreds of chairs—ah, sure and certain sign!—are placed, leaning together two by two, as if invisible lovers are tilting them as they embrace regardless of the law of gravity. Such a comedy in chairs! Here two are not leaning like the others: they are back to back. A quarrel? Over there three chairs, very proper and stiff, are placed together. That triangle again. . . .

Children pass: fat, pink children, their small legs at last free from fluffy woolen overalls. They love to run and wave their arms and feel grass beneath their feet. Over in a small paddock-like enclosure near Kensington Palace a thousand daffodils, like the spears of Oberon's army leap in golden glory from the turf. . . .

Ah, it is good to be in London on an April morning with life in the air, the sun coming in

bursts, the great clouds sailing at top speed, big cottonwool clouds with golden undersides.

You will go down to the city. See Spring come marching into London Town, her green banners high.

In the quiet Temple with noisy Fleet Street thundering past beyond the old entrance gateway, sparrows are chattering. Almost white buds shine on the trees. From the fountain in Fountain Court springs a thin jet of water, and beside the fountain is surely the first American girl to bring a guidebook to the Temple this year. She wears a plaid coat with a dressing of lambs' wool, narrow snake-skin shoes, apricot stockings and embroidered gauntlets bought in the Rue de la Paix.

"Why, isn't this just lovely?"

Below in Garden Court the borders of hyacinths are out, white and blue, the daffodils are in blossom, and the sharp green of the lawns is like a compliment to the gray old buildings on either side. The lawyers pass to and fro, and as the wind and the sun meet them, and they see a pretty girl with a guidebook gazing at the fountain they feel ten years younger, and look almost like ordinary harmless men.

Spring dances on . . . in field and city, in head and in heart.

NAZARETH COLLEGE
LIBRARY

II

CHOOSE a windy day, such as April provides in rich profusion, and climb the Monument. This white pillar rises up from the smell of Billingsgate Fish Market hard by London Bridge; and I will tell you when you reach the top of it why and when it was built. If there is sun so much the better. Without wind there is no view of London, for the smoke of a million chimneys lies like a black sheet over the city, hiding it and obliterating the green hills Tilbury way and the green hills Harrow way and the emerald heath at Hampstead.

At the base of the Monument sits a gray-haired man in a box, who takes your threepence and tells you that there are three hundred and eleven steps in the spiral staircase; and, yes, the fish at Billingsgate is pretty strong this morning; and, no, very few people ever come to climb the Monument at this time of year! (He agrees that this is the right time to climb it!) But in the season you couldn't count the Americans and Japanese and French people and others of less obvious nationality who like to walk about on the roof of London and gaze out on the greenness of Kent, and trace the Thames like

a silver eel twisting through the darkness and the smoke towards hills and the sea.

"And they all blame the steps!" says the guardian of the Monument. "Some think we ought to put in a lift. But what I say is: If you can go up and not feel a twinge of anything, then there's no need for you to go wasting your money on doctors. . . ."

That man is right. The Monument staircase is a cheap gymnasium. Once up and down every day would reduce the superfluous fat of the City of London, would send the blood tingling through the body, and, if it did not kill within the week, would be equivalent to many rounds of golf.

When you look up from Step 1 you feel like a microbe at the extremity of a long and curly corkscrew. The staircase loops round and round, ending in a far circle that seems no larger than a finger ring. At intervals all the way up thoughtful Sir Christopher Wren provided little embrasures, where you can sit and puff.

At Step 204 you realize that you really must stop cigarette smoking; at Step 250 you think rather sadly of the return journey; at Step 300 daylight begins to dawn from above, and, after

a last and rather gallant effort, you walk out on the stone balcony, and—below lies London!

What a mediæval mass of smoke! Even on clear, windy days with the far spire of Harrow Church like a black pin on a green pincushion there is smoke over London. As you look at those busy chimneys you wonder what Americans, who grow romantic every time they see a "coal fire," would say to the sight of millions of chimneys, each one pouring out a dark blue wisp that forms a poisonous cloud drifting through the streets.

Londoners do not notice this on the ground level, or perhaps they are inoculated, but from the height of the Monument London is a city bathed in smoke. The streets of the City end in blue mists. The spires of the churches, which Sir Christopher Wren built after the Great Fire of 1666, push their gray heads above it, and any object more than half a mile away is obliterated by smoke till a wind springs up. The roar of traffic comes up to you. When you hold tight to the iron balustrading you can feel the vibration.

Tiny omnibuses run below; tiny men cross the road; in offices, like sections of honeycomb, thousands of typists are tapping their machines in one big building. You explore the activities

of thirty firms as your eye sweeps the frontage. Managers at lonely desks, secretaries coming in with papers, typists fluffing their hair and typing. In one room two office boys are having a fight. What a hive!

On the roof of another building a man is putting a roller over a golf course! Behind runs the Thames, gray and misty. Barges, tugs, cranes, here and there an anchored ship. A Lilliputian train puffs out from the huge, jet-black ugliness of Cannon Street Station. On the other side Tower Bridge is faintly visible. Immediately below, midgets carry fish in baskets, and a long line of carts twists down to Billingsgate.

The Monument, which marks the spot where the Great Fire of London began, was once popular with suicides, and that is the reason why the City fathers put the hideous cage over the platform. William Green, a weaver, was the first to jump off in 1750. On June 25th this man, wearing a green apron, came to the Monument door and asked the man at the bottom to take care of his watch. A few minutes later he was heard to fall. The next man was Thomas Craddock, a baker. He fell off accidentally when leaning over to look at an eagle which was hung in a cage from the bars of the para-

pet. Lyon Levi, a financially troubled diamond merchant, jumped over the platform in 1810; and in 1839 a young woman named Margaret Meyer, the daughter of a baker, flung herself into the street below. In the same year a young boy committed suicide there. The last tragedy was in 1842, when a Hoxton servant girl, Jane Cooper, tucked her clothes tightly between her knees, climbed over the iron railing, and dived head foremost into space.

At this point the City of London thought the Monument was becoming too fashionable, so a suicide-proof cage was erected.

You may, or you may not, think of all this as you stand alone on the roof of London. How lonely it is up there! It occurs to you that this is perhaps the only public spot in the centre of London in which you can be alone. You wonder how many lovers in London's history have found this the only spot for an unobserved kiss; and then some one coughs and you turn to see an official sitting in a secluded box.

"I'm here to prevent people throwing bottles," he says. "There's no limit to the silly things people do. Some want to throw pennies. Imagine what a penny would feel like all the way from here!"

You walk down; and the man at the other end

seems quite pleased when you tell him that it is well worth threepence.

III

TAILORS in Savile Row know him well. He is ageing almost imperceptibly, not so straight as once he was, and his experienced eyes lie in dark bags full of wrinkles. Newspaper boys still call him, quite inaccurately, "Colonel." He possesses about £600 a year from stock and rich friends worth £2,000 a year in bed and board, in return for which he is amusingly cynical at dinner.

He may be fifty or sixty. It is inconceivable that he should ever have married; that his hard sense of humor should have permitted him to reproduce himself. Life to him is a tragi-comedy, and he sits rather bored in a free stall. Sometimes you meet him in Lady X's villa on Montecattini, he pops up in somebody's yacht at Palermo, he exudes a certain richness at house parties; it is always to him that a host turns when a new wine demands appreciation, when a new dish deserves an accolade. Bankrupt Petronius . . . but rich in talk, a millionaire in experience of the world and of men;

an old man who has always managed to live well on nothing, not a parasite on society so much as an inevitable attachment; not a borrower, even of epigram; a cynical poor old Brummell. . . .

You will always meet him at your tailor's in April, for this is the time of year when he orders his annual suit of clothes. You and I dash in, choose cloth, bully the tailor into making the suit with one fitting, and dash out again. Not Petronius. How he lingers, fusses worse than any woman, considers sleeve buttons, ponders the fall of a lapel as a business man ponders a deal that may not turn out too well. . . .

Very good, sir, if *you* say so. . . .

The tailor, the man whom you have seen autocratic with peers' trousers, kowtows to old Petronius, abases himself before him, moves round him in a condition of mental genuflection. Why? He knows perfectly well that the old man is broke, that the suit will be sent to some small two-room garret in a sonorous neighborhood near Park Lane, that it will be the only suit he will make for him till next May—but . . . there is a something about him that money cannot buy, something that persists against reason, as though—well, as though generations

of Brummells are speaking to generations of tailors.

The old man's money may not speak, but his blood does!

And quite soon now you will see him—neat waisted and white gloved, walking slowly along Bond Street in the morning as if he hadn't a care on earth. Of all the people who make Bond Street a human drama he, to me, is the most interesting; the born guest, the preordained shadow of the rich, a type older than Rome. He bears some relation to the mediæval jester, owes something to the freedmen of, say, the time of Claudius, has some qualities of the soldier of fortune, and the heart of a wandering philosopher, all of this filtered through Oxford, burdened by a tradition and watered down by racial anæmia.

"Charming!" say women.

"Knows his way about!" say men.

"Poor sponge," says the Comic Muse, "who would rather hitch his canoe to a friend's yacht than take off his coat and paddle it himself."

In spite of his knowledge it is really remarkable how he manages on his £600 to find his way into the right places, to drift through the London season in just the right set. If only he

had any commercial energy what a school for climbers he could run. . . .

As he walks down Bond Street notice that his new suit acts like wine on him; how obviously amusing he is as he stops to talk with a woman —a useful woman with a place in Scotland! If ever his conscience says, "You old fraud, you old hanger-on, you should be ashamed of yourself!" I am certain his better self immediately replies, "Rot! I've given them dashed good value for money. . . ."

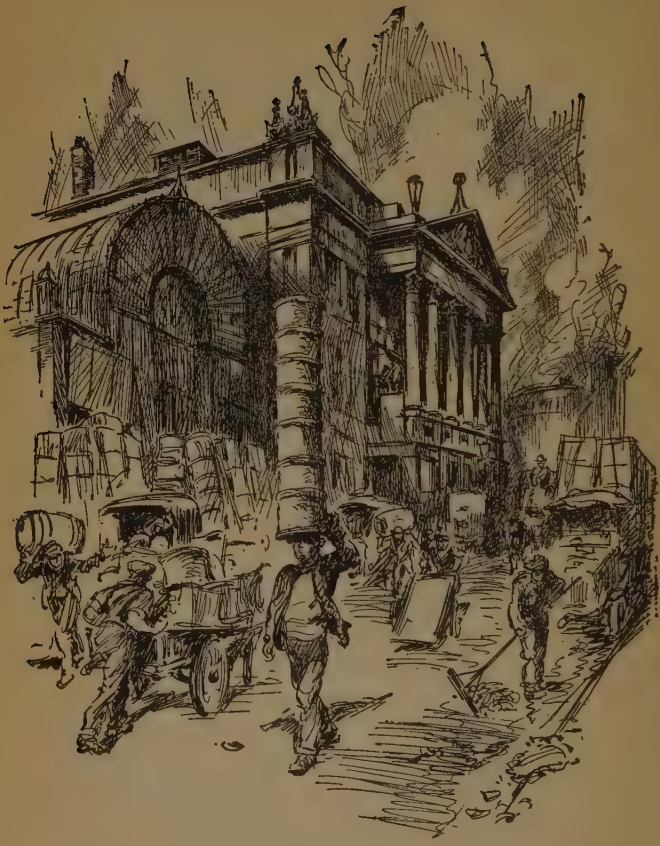
Sometimes in the Autumn, when all his friends have left London, you will see old Petronius sitting on a green seat in Hyde Park with the yellow leaves sailing down above him. It hurts to feel that he has been left out of a house party, brings out the truth that he is growing old, and, worse, dull. So he just sits there, with the little gold, burnt-out glories of Summer falling as softly as a sigh, thinking—who knows what? The light is drawn out of the sky and dusk falls; the traffic spins glowing on the far side of the rails; through the dark tunnel of trees pass lovers; from Knightsbridge come smooth gray limousines with girls in silver cloaks, pale as moths against the dove-gray cushions, and this old man sitting with the only

company in which his wit and courage fail—with himself.

Loneliness is like a ghost at the end of life, loneliness and no one to care, no one to love, and life over. You cannot mock life and escape the bill. . . .

So, maybe, as a chill wind pulls the dead leaves into a dance the old man who has never before lacked an audience rises, shivering a little, and goes to his empty rooms wishing . . . wishing that he could afford a pint of dry champagne. . . .

MAY: *You go to the Royal Academy—to Rotten Row—to the Chelsea Flower Show—into Bond Street—to the Ladies Kennel Club Show—you meet some lovely Americans—you see the Royal Tournament—the Opera—Bluebells at Kew—Cynthia goes to Court—you go to Hurlingham and, of course to the Derby.*



COVENT GARDEN OPERA HOUSE

MAY

I

"AWFULLY . . . er . . . frightfully jolly. You know what I mean!"

The Royal Academy of Arts opens its inexpensive doors to the public on the first Monday in May. It is the beginning of the London Season. The broad court yard of black Burlington House in Piccadilly—a quadrangle sacred to learned societies—is enlivened all day by a distracting trail of scent and a delicious trickle of chatter, so that the wandering archæologist and the stray scientist, gazing over their spectacles gladly at the passing ankles, realize, possibly with a start of surprise, that May has come.

There are two things worth noting about this annual show of all that is, by the Society, deemed good in the year's art: the artist who lingers near his picture listening-in to comment and the poor ordinary dragged-to-Burlington-House young man who gropes for words to express his insincerity.

Women are essentially cruel. They know

more about art chat than the average man, and at any of these big art shows you can see them dragging the captive behind them—a husband or generally a sweetheart—making it necessary for him to prove that he is not a Philistine, a most difficult and wearing process to all honest sportsmen.

There is no more harrowing sight in the year than that of good plain fellows brought up on golf, tennis and cricket, fumbling for a Chelsea point of view in order that a pair of blue eyes may not scorn them. The most popular expression is that of damp sickliness, but with a little careful eavesdropping it should not be difficult for any Philistine to learn how to approach a picture, crouch, creep away from it, close one eye, put up a hand as if warding it off, and say vaguely:

"Something wrong . . . somewhere . . . middle distance . . . but not bad!"

That, anyhow, is better than the naïve "Awfully jolly" which brings a girl's eyes round on the observer like a couple of searchlights!

How invariable is the first public crush at the Royal Academy. It is as happy-go-lucky as the private view is sadly smart. The same herds of long, sandy-legged maidens, the same rusty old ladies, the same intelligent young men, the

same dull but honest husbands, the same old men whose eyes seem dim with fifty years of Royal Academy gazing and the same visitor wearing an obstinate-looking top hat like a cat that has been stroked the wrong way. Occasionally you meet a Forsyte left over from the private view. . . .

And the same pictures! Girls without clothes in armchairs or standing beside streams, lobsters and cabbages lying on the usual plate, the sea coming in or going out, moonlight on Venice, and crowds of drawing-room women radiating a uniform sweetness: chocolate-box queens.

In the crowd, among the clustered schoolgirls and the solemn, large-hatted schoolboys, moves many an artist. This is the day the unhung appear to see how much better their work is than that which found favor in the eyes of the Hanging Committee. From picture to picture they drift; and then, perhaps, they go home and take out their masterpieces and feel superior. . . .

"By Jove, that's good, Mary!" says a man. "That's what I call a picture! Look at that egg cup! Look at that bit of cake! They stand out; they're real! Don't you feel you

could take a spoon and hit that egg? I'm hungry!"

A few women gaze mournfully at the speaker and move away, for you are not supposed to feel hearty at the Royal Academy. In front of a field full of buttercups and sheep you discover the author.

"It's sold," he says triumphantly.

"I always heard that murderers were unable to keep away from the scene of the crime!"

"As a matter of fact," he whispers, "I came to hear what the public think about it. Although I oughtn't to say so, it's a pretty good thing . . . not that it matters what they say, but, well, you know . . ."

"And have you heard anything worth repeating?"

"Nothing intelligent! One old lady kind of melted, and said she felt like lying down and rolling in the grass, and a very pretty girl—blonde—said that she felt she could actually pluck the buttercups, and how cuddlesome the sheep were. This is the award one receives for months of struggle."

At this moment a man and woman come up, tilt their heads, walk to a side, and the woman says in a penetrating voice:

"Who ever saw blue grass?"

"Rotten!" says the man.

The father of blue grass seems about to defend his child, so you leave him. . . .

Brass turnstiles are still clicking, admitting the day-long crowd, leading them to oceans of small talk; and outward goes the crowd.

"Nothing great! Nothing you'd like to . . . *live with.*"

Poor artists. . . .

II

MAYTIME in Rotten Row. . . . Why Rotten? I believe the word is derived from *Rotteran,* meaning to muster; and the horsemen and the horsewomen of Mayfair have been mustering there since the time of Charles I., under the trees of Hyde Park in the very heart of London.

The sun shines from a dappled sky. In the golden light the young leaves crisply uncurling, resemble swarms of tiny green butterflies clustered to the trees, and the shadows of the tall elms lie over the straight stretch of chocolate tan like thin pencils. Such sharpness of grass, such a sweet scent of cut lawns mingled with the warmth of new-turned soil. Companies of yellow tulips stand up like the armies of fairyland stiff on parade. Here an early rhododendron holds its wine-dark flowers in the sun; there neat beds of small, simple flowers hide the soil. Hyde Park, the pulse of elegant London, now beats to the old tune. The green chairs are out in their thousands, the tiny ping of the ticket man's punch sounds above the chatter as a newcomer takes a seat; and down that gentle, undulating avenue beside the Row strolls a crowd—mostly visitors looking at London.

It is eleven o'clock. The hoof marks of the business man's horse printed in the tan before breakfast have been obliterated by the horses of those later ones who go to offices in Whitehall at eleven. Now the cavalcade grows every minute, as those come trit-trotting through the Park gates to whom a ride in the Row, a bath, and luncheon are the chief events of the morning.

This is London. . . .

To the left, the patchy, weathered whiteness of the lodge gates; to the right, a tunnel of sun-speckled trees; through the Park rails ahead, the drone and surge of traffic, houses and shops, small and bright, like the background to a Lovat Fraser sketch.

Three abreast they come, cantering, kicking the tan behind; two fat ponies and a groom, two delicious pink and white maids, their thin legs in Jodhpur breeches, their long hair in plaits, their little arms hardly strong enough to rein in their good-natured mounts. Back and forward go the riders, walking, trotting, cantering. Now a matron, with a felt hat on a bun of hair, comes galloping along like a major at the head of a charging squadron, firm as a rock in her side saddle. A girl riding astride, not too happy on her patient hack; young men, old men, good horses, and horses—chiefly horses. Now and then the crowds stop and follow a rider.

"Lord Blank!"

The provincial visitors follow the rider with their eyes; the horsey ones admire his mount. Blood! The best horse in the Row!

"The Row's bucking up a lot," says a man.

"I hear that quite a lot of people intend to bring horses up from the country this season."

"Ah," says his friend, "do you remember the Row fifty years ago, my boy? You couldn't turn out in your old clothes then. . . ."

"Ah!" they say, and sigh and shake their heads and go off to the club.

I walk on, loving everything about Hyde Park, loving the detached men in odd corners who feed mahogany-headed cock sparrows, the trim nursemaids with their shining charges, the Mayfair mother and daughters who stop to chat with a rider, the idle holiday crowds. . . .

I smile to remember that when King Charles was executed Hyde Park was sold for £17,068 *2s.* 8*d.*! I wonder what each blade of grass is worth to-day! I remember how Henry VIII hunted and hawked here, how the English kings have always paraded here on their horses: and I try to recollect the names of those men who came here in the first chill glimmer of dawn, to fling their coats on the grass, salute, and then . . . a glitter and click of rapiers, a stamping of red-heeled shoes, a shifting of ground, and eventually an insult wiped out, an indiscretion avenged, a woman defended. . . .

Suddenly, as if a cloak had been flung over the sun, semi-darkness falls and rain comes

down. There is a rush for the trees. From the Row comes the sweet rasp of boots on stirrup leathers, the pretty jingle of bits, the muffled thud of hooves. The rain ceases. The sun reappears. My eye catches a blaze of scarlet from Buckingham Palace: the King's Life Guards trotting back from Whitehall, cloaked! How the sun fires their brass helmets, runs the length of their drawn swords! They rein in to walk as they come towards the Park gates; red cloaks, black horses, and gold helmets. . . .

"Gorgeous!" says a girl.

Reins slip through brown gloved fingers and riders turn to look.

In a side walk an old man, still as a stone, watches a sparrow perched on his hand as though it were the most beautiful thing on earth. . . .

III

I WILL give you a little taste of London few have savored, because the public is excluded till it has been enjoyed. This is the first appearance of the King and Queen at the outset of the season; and it is always a private visit.

Ten-thirty in the morning. As I walk up

the avenue, with the Chelsea Hospital on my right, I see the tents of the Flower Show peeping between green leaves; lovely Maytime sight, lovely send-off to the season! The King and Queen are inside, and no sightseer will be admitted till they leave—otherwise there would not be room to move! A smart crowd waits, therefore, in the warm sunshine at the closed gates, sitting on the pediment of the rails watching the ancient warriors in the gardens behind: old scarlet-coated men who smoke their pipes as they recall battles long ago or—wonder about the winner of the three-thirty! A gardener walks behind an enthusiastic motor lawn mower; each revolution of the scythes sends up a warm scent cloud of cut grass.

I produce a yellow judge's ticket, the crowd behind the gates looks at me enviously; and I go in under a cool avenue of fresh leaves.

Royalty has the same effect on an exhibition that the divisional general had on a battalion during the war. People polish objects feverishly with an eye on the corner; men come up and whisper mysteriously; the air is thrilling with expectancy.

I walk on between lines of tents through whose triangular flaps are seen the most lovely flowers in the world. I pause to watch a man

dust the nose of a stone Cupid. I walk round a gorgeous little Italian paradiso marveling at the beauty an expert gardener can pull out of crazy pavement, tiny rock plants and half a bathful of water. As I bend down to admire the Lilliputian world which grows between the cracks and in the crevices a deep voice says, "May, I want you to look at this!"

The King! He is standing at my elbow! I raise my hat and retire in good order. The King raises his shining silk hat. I notice that he is wearing striped morning trousers creased down the sides, as King Edward often wore them. There is a large white flower in his coat, and he carries an umbrella hooked over his arm. He points out a flower to the Queen, his hand in a light tan glove.

Women always walk round flower shows more slowly than men. Men take in masses of color, women adore to examine detail. The Queen is some way behind the King, bending over a tiny plant. She smiles and comes up to him and together they go on. This is the one day in the crowded procession of the London season when you may meet the King and the Queen separated from the pageantry of a palace. They have come to enjoy flowers like two ordinary spectators, and, without dogging their

footsteps, it is possible to feel how good it must seem to them to escape from the publicity of the Crown and to hear no Anthem when they break cover.

Privacy is never quite possible, even at the Flower Show. A rather delightful crowd drifts after them. Some crowds must be hateful to crowned heads: the jostling, would-be fraternal crowds who would extend democratic freedom into the region of ill breeding. This crowd has, in the main, a rustic air. It is composed of men and women who have come from many parts of the country with their greenhouse marvels. The women drop curtseys whenever the Queen comes in sight; the men hold their hats. If the royal visitors remain stationary they edge up a step nervously, as a herd of deer will advance towards a man. The King raises his hat; the Queen smiles; and so they go on. Such letters must go home to Somerset and Devon: "And I heard the King call the Queen 'May'!"

To a person of any sensibility the private view of this show induces a keen desire to avoid the King and Queen in order that you may not intrude upon what is so obviously a private occasion. The more conscientiously you bend over bushes and peer at blossoms the more difficult it becomes, for sooner or later you hear

the King's voice again and the Queen answering; you see a man who has created a new gardenia being presented to the Queen, and taking her hand as if it were red-hot metal.

So you meet their Majesties again and again in dim marquees which are stuffy with a million sweet scents. They walk over the pungent, bruised grass admiring luscious banks of flaming yellow and red, foaming seas of white and flame: azaleas, carnations, roses.

The shy crowd follows, enjoying this informal glimpse of royalty. I am reminded of earlier times; say the times of Pepys, when any Londoner in the Mall might come face to face with the King, walking.

Eventually the time arrives when the royal car purrs out over the drive by a back way and the front gates are flung open.

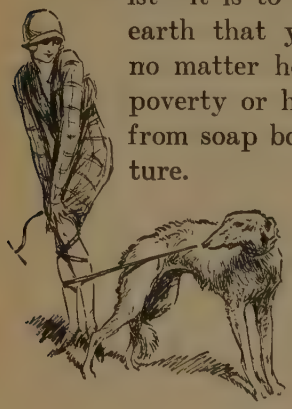
The men and women who have been waiting for an hour and a half flock in to look at flowers and to enjoy that glorious festival of scent and color that once a year gladdens the heart of gray old London.

IV

YOU will in May walk down Bond Street, between London's most expensive shops, and

allow the flavor of the morning to roll over the palate like a vintage wine.

Bond Street is one of the world's ways; it is international. I dare say savages in the Congo are aware of it. Every great city has its Bond Street. New York has Fifth Avenue; Paris has the Rue de la Paix; Berlin Unter den Linden, and Rome the Via Condotti—all streets in which the wealth of great cities has created a demand for those things which distinguish civilization from barbarism: elegance, culture, beauty. In these streets quality has crystallized, and, of course, you have to pay for quality, which is, I often think, the only thing worth paying for. When you have made your money —especially if you are a Communist or a Socialist—it is to the Bond Streets of the earth that you gravitate naturally, no matter how you scorned them in poverty or how you sneered at them from soap boxes. That is human nature.



When you review all the elegant streets of the world, it boils down to the fact that there is only one Bond Street—London's. Others are

more magnificent as streets, but Bond Street has a *cachet* which has nothing to do with mere wealth: it is unselfconscious; it is a Georgian gallant of a street, unhurried and well-bred, a lovable, clubable spot—Mayfair's "main street."

Now let's go!

As you turn in from Piccadilly you slow up, for the crowd on the narrow pavement is as dense as the solid jam of omnibuses and limousines in the road.

A musical comedy actress who is almost as beautiful as her photographs steps from her car with a gray richness of squirrel fur around her, and goes up in a photographer's lift to create a toothsome smile which you will soon see on a soap advertisement. Girls notable for well-modeled legs admire gowns in shop windows, young men ponder boxes of fat, gold-tipped cigarettes. A small American débutante who knows every twist of smart New York walks down Bond Street feeling that this narrow, smoke-pointed street is different from anything she has experienced—there is a tradition to it. . . .

See that white old man—General Sir X. X., who rode to the relief of Carter in '82. That

other man to whom he is talking is a millionaire who began life as a bricklayer's mate.

As you go on you realize that Bond Street on a May morning is a club full of members and visitors. The members walk slowly along, meeting other members; the visitors are less leisurely, and seem in search of something.

You pass art galleries and shops in which women can indulge every vanity, curio shops full of lovely things, and bookshops. Outside a picture shop you meet Soames Forsyte with his head on one side, wondering if such-and-such a painter's work will go up or down in value during the next ten years. Two girls turn to look at a young man; a famous *matinée* god, who knows it. In New Bond Street you pass an auction room which draws collectors round its green tables from every city in the world. You admire giant cheeses and trussed, powdered quail in a provision shop; such a homely touch in Bond Street! It is amusing to know that people still buy groceries in Bond Street, as Nelson did when he lodged there, as Lady Hamilton did, as Dean Swift did, as Boswell did.

Such unselfconsciousness! A lesser street would have cleared out its Gorgonzola long ago!

Ah, what's this? A crowd pretending not to be a crowd, feigning interest in a window, yet with one eye on a long, chocolate-colored limousine, with a tiny crown stamped on the enameled door and a footman in a long fawn overcoat standing to attention with a rug over his arm.

The omnibuses thread their way cleverly round the big car; the crowd-in-spite-of-itself grows. Women whisper. Suddenly the shop doors open. There is much discreet genuflection and a woman takes two paces and enters the car. "The Queen!"

The crowd now smiles, forgetting its bad manners in its delight, and the Queen smiles back. Men raise their hats; women wonder whether they should curtsey or just look pleased. In the background is a flushed woman who happened to be buying a pair of gloves when the Queen came in. The tea tables of Kensington will know of this before the day is done! The big limousine purrs off and is lost in a maze of wheels.

Down Bond Street you go again, slowly, elegantly, enjoying the faces and the clothes and the windows, and something that is nothing of these—just Bond Street on a May morning.

V

IF YOU have a dog fancier in the family you will have watched with something between alarm and admiration how gradually he tends to resemble his dog. In time it becomes difficult to tell which of them won prizes at shows.

Women, I am glad to say, can fancy dogs and still look like women. As soon as you enter the Ladies' Kennel Association's show at Olympia you know that it is going to be interesting, because the country girl has come up to town in a real country-cut tweed costume. Is there anything more beautiful in all the green shires of England than the girl who drives the dog cart or walks through the village with five fat Sealyhams lumbering along at the hem of her skirt?

Here and there, you must admit, a stray whippet has reproduced its sharpness on the face of a mistress addicted to a high masculine collar; but, generally speaking, the members of the Ladies' Kennel Association prove that England is still sound at heart, that there is not a great sale for rouge at Little Bumbleton, and that the hardness of a dog's life has been greatly exaggerated.

The tragedy of writing is that you always feel that you do so much better in paint. As you wander round this show you will wish that you could paint a picture of the girl round whose legs a startled Borzoi has thrice wrapped his leash. Very pretty in a Lewis Baumerish style. So is the corn-colored girl who sits smoking a cigarette, in the same pen with a retriever, her arm among the black silkiness, a green jade bracelet giving just the touch of color necessary, and the dog's eyes, with a million unwritten sonnets in them, gazing at her as only a dog can gaze. . . .

There is a large, masterful woman combing a handful of dog that resembles a pincushion; there is a slim slip of a girl assembling the limp bulk of a Great Dane that could eat her in two gulps.

Dogs are generous creatures. The way they humor our human incomprehensibility is a lesson in tolerance. If you have ever gone to a doctor, been undressed, prodded, suffered the humiliation of having your stomach pressed, patted, and slapped, you can enter into the feelings of certain finely-bred dogs at a championship show.

You watch with deep sympathy a parade of Borzois round a judging ring, beautiful, swift,

elongated creatures, thin as though they had just been pressed through a mangle. In the face of their utter embarrassment, their almost blushing shame, you wonder how any man has the nerve to explore their forelegs, lift them from the floor and examine the privacy of their mouths!

I doubt if we would understand anything more about dogs if they could talk to us with words instead of eyes. You will walk past hundreds of pens and enjoy the personality of dogs; St. Bernards, vast of jowl and dignified, Poodles (the Little Lord Fauntleroys of the kennel in their absurd frills and fripperies), bulldogs like big frogs, mainly disdainful Danes, and the most melancholy dog on earth, the wolfhound, brooding on the ineffable pathos of life.

To some dogs a show is a ghastly affair. They regard it as a permanent condition and become wild about it. Others, notably terriers, consider it an amusing occasion, demanding continual comment.

In a corner pen you discover the philosopher. He is a black Skye terrier with hair like a shaving brush. He is curled up in a ball so that you see the little soft black pads of his feet, and his whiskery nose is buried in his chest. His

body heaves with happy slumber. Now and then a leg twitches, and I suppose he is far away from shows following his women over the hills. In the next pen a white-whiskered face peeps round at the sleeper with an expression of blank surprise: "How on earth can you sleep while these vulgar fox terriers are inviting us to battle?"

Luncheon time happens and the girls in tweed perch themselves on the edge of pens and bring out cold salmon and cold chicken and sandwiches of many kinds. Now and then a pink tongue flickers at their ears and a pair of eyes say "How long does this purgatory continue? You know I'd do anything on earth for you, but, really, this is a bit thick! Look at that conceited Schipperke over the way! I've been nicely brought up till now, and here you go and bring out all my repressions. . . ."

Anyhow, I hope that when life is over and the Spirit of Man comes for judgment some one in authority will up and say in defense, "Dogs adored him."

VI

EVERY London morning, two buildings—the Guaranty Trust and the American Express

Co.—one in Pall Mall, the other in the Haymarket—exert a magnetic influence over American visitors.

Beautiful girls who compliment hotel suites by living in them slip from their salmon-pink *négligées* into coats and skirts. Or perhaps they slip into little Paris gowns which terminate at one end in thin, black ribbons and Peter Pan collars, and at the other in a pair of silk knees. They sometimes wear black silk stockings with low-heeled shoes of infinite variety, shoes which look as though a temperamental cobbler had changed his mind at the last moment and decided not to make them *suède* all over. Some have *suède* toes and patent leather sides; others have patent leather toes and *suède* flanks. There is no rule.

The men who belong so definitely to these women put on tweed suits, the coats tightly belted so that a fat man of fifty-five looks twenty years from behind and twenty stone from the front. They light cigars, take up straw hats, and, introducing pink, smooth faces still shining with the best advertised shaving cream into the adjacent boudoir, remark:

"Say, now, when'll you girls show some speed?"

"Oh, fade away, dad; we're not ready yet!" says something very lovely and worth while.

"Well, look here," pleads dad. "I want to see my mail. . . . I'm just crazy to see my mail."

There is a fussing with coats like draught boards gone gay, and eventually they are on the way to one of those two magnetic buildings —one in Pall Mall, one in the Haymarket— those links with the United States, those hands across the sea, those homes from home, those G. H. Q.'s of the almighty letter of credit.

Here you meet them all: Mamie from Oshkosh, and Grace from Washington, and Maud from Louisville. They lean against counters gazing earnestly at clerks, or they stand in little knots in the centre of the wide floor, saying, "Why, fancy meeting you! We thought you were in Rome!"

America has won the expensive freedom of the world. There has never been any country since the world began from which its citizens escape so frequently and with such apparent joy. Some of them seem delighted that there is no place like home.

Among the bright exiles comes now and then some tall potential contesse, a dollar princess, who casts not a glance at the rabble as she goes

with cool elegance to the banking department with a powerful letter of credit:

"I want eight hundred dollars, please."

They give it to her in crisp fivers.

"I can't carry that junk around!" she says, pushing back a pile of odd pennies with a scented gray glove.

"Darling! We were talking about you only yesterday."

"Mary!"

Another dollar princess gushes up. "Yes, mother and dad are in London! Yes; Claridge's. I'm going to be presented at Court next week. I'm having a wonderful time! You must meet Lord Blink! Such a charming man! Oh, my dear, I'm taking lessons in curtseying to the Queen and—oh, gee—the things I've got to remember not to do! Let's have a party!"

The other exiles put their heads together and whisper a well-upholstered name as they watch the girls. You feel a new romance in life. To think that pork with tomato sauce can create and support such beauty! You regard the dull, useful men, and think that here a law of nature has been marvelously reversed, and you wonder what nature intends to do about it. Woman is the American religion, and she is quite aware of it. She justifies Ameri-

can civilization. The United States cannot point to ten centuries of history, but it can say: "I want to have you meet Maudie!" And Maudie, nine times out of ten, makes the Battle of Hastings look cheap. But we are diverted. . . .

Watch Dad!

The girls are chattering together about the *de luxe* trip to Shakespeare's country which he has just bought over the counter. Dad stands, a little removed, fumbling over a handful of letters whose stamps bear the head of truthful George. He goes a sickly color and lets his cigar out, biting the end and glooming, an open letter in his hand.

"Why, dad, what . . ."

"Darn it . . . oh, darn that bonehead! I might have known he wasn't worth a row of beans! Darn him!"

He goes on glooming with the letter in his hand. His wife surges into the catastrophe to the scent of "Chypre."

"Is it the Amalgamated Pig Ore?" she asks gently.

"Yes," he replies bitterly. "Guess I've got to beat it back and straighten things out. Things have gotten into a bad way!"

There is a desperate tilt to his hat as he goes

out into the Haymarket, his women folk before him, glum and slightly peevish.

"Darn it!" he says helplessly to them—but in his soul he feels warm and comfy because there are typewriters clicking there and tape machines. He is going back where life is real.

VII

OLYMPIA, that big glass house near Kensington, enters the London season with the Royal Tournament, and not to go to the Royal Tournament is like giving up asparagus in spring, or, later on, renouncing strawberries: it gives you the flavor of the year. At the Royal Tournament the Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force make their bow to London.

The Duke of Connaught is in the royal box, and Olympia is packed. Just once a year the Army Council makes our theatrical producers look like infants. I say the Army Council from sheer tact, but I think that the people we must thank are those smart young captains and lieutenants who ap-

pear suddenly below the royal box, stand to attention while their unit does its bit, about turn, salute, and disappear to (I hope) congratulate the sergeant-major!

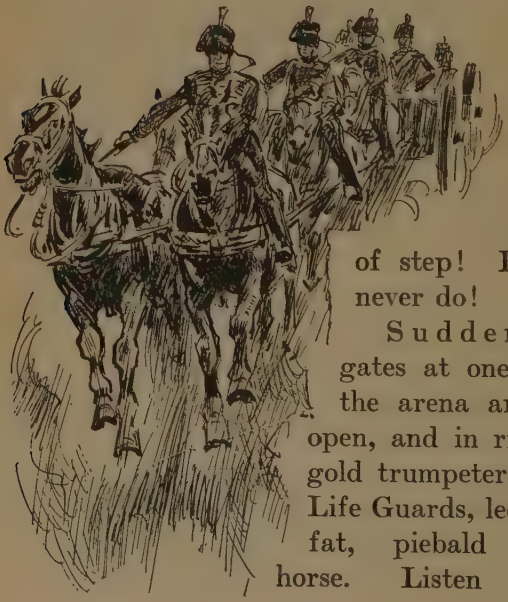
What a slick show it is! Even the way fatigue parties move box jumps "by numbers" is a "turn" worth praise. Now and then, if you listen, you can hear a sergeantorial voice growling, "Come on there—come on!" Such a cry from a far country!

I have four complete thrills at the Tournament. I am thrilled by the riding and the remounts from the Cavalry School at Weedon. These boys canter into the arena, unstrap their stirrup irons, fling them into the tan, and do all kinds of "stunts" at the canter. Then, still cantering, they unstrap their girths, pull the saddles from beneath them, throw them away, take fences bareback, and while they jump they unbutton and take off their tunics. It is a splendid show, and—the horses are all to be congratulated!

Then thrill two! If the Royal Air Force is as good in the air as it is on the parade ground there is nothing to fear next time. These boys, who still look eighteen years old, march and handle their rifles with a precision which is posi-

tively beautiful. I will go year after year to see them present arms and to hear that unanimous ring of hands on magazines and see that simultaneous puff of pipeclay. Marvelous! We who remember how difficult it once was to order arms without being spotted can only sit and gloat over it and wonder a little sadly how much pain and language has gone to the making of it.

They are so good that you follow them, almost hoping to catch some poor criminal out



of step! But you never do!

Suddenly the gates at one end of the arena are flung open, and in ride four gold trumpeters of the Life Guards, led by the fat, piebald drum horse. Listen to the

sound of cavalry drums and to the silver fanfare! Behind jingles the musical ride of the 1st and 2nd Life Guards. Pennants fluttering from lances, their white plumes waving, their breastplates gleaming, they come in, wheel round into line, part, trot round the arena, meet in half sections, meet in sections of four, visit as in lancers, waltz, while the band plays dance music and the big black chargers that follow the King through the streets of London behave like perfect ladies. The usual *prima donna* that develops a touch of prancing temperament only makes it all more perfect. Is there a finer sight than a Life-guardsman sitting a restive charger? Then in a breathless hush they line up at opposite ends of the arena, the trumpeters blow the charge, and with a cry they press their knees to the saddle, crouch, and fly together with a whistle of lance pennants—but not quite! At the point of contact they wheel round into line, salute the royal box, and calmly trot out—a troop of knights in silver and scarlet. . . .

Of course the Navy does its bit.

The sailors put more "beef" into their "turn" than it seems possible to compress into half an hour. The Navy delights in hauling heavy

guns about the world. It seems to love pulling them to pieces, to enjoy throwing the fragments over parapets, to pull wheels from gun carriages, and suddenly to put this metal jig-saw puzzle together again; and all done so quickly that you cannot think it difficult.

As I leave Olympia the guns of the Royal Horse Artillery are rumbling over the tan in that breathless event known as a musical ride. The gunners wear the splendid uniform of the Peninsular War period, and all the old Chelsea pensioners in the audience, some of whom look quite old enough to have won the Battle of Waterloo, bend their white heads together, and feel that this is getting back somewhere near the good old days.

Crisscross over the arena thunder the guns, the wheels of the gun carriages missing collision by inches as the teams flash by, the six horses of each team, eager, with outstretched necks, galloping as if on their way to save the Empire. Then the sudden end, a grind of wheels, a cloud of dust, a line of gun carriages, and a salute of white whips. . . .

A great show! Also a wonderful object lesson in the rebuilding of the British Army.

VIII

IS THERE another opera house on earth situated in the middle of a fruit and vegetable market?

Leave the smell of oranges to the night, attack that truculent type of swing door that loves to help you in with a swift kick in the back, and discover yourself in the morgue-like foyer of Covent Garden. It is a night of grand opera.

If this is your first visit the gloom of the entrance hall surprises you. Perhaps when you were a small child Covent Garden stood with Cinderella's ball in your imagination as the apex of brilliancy. You were taken to see your mother ready dressed for the opera, and you wondered, as the carriage wheels rolled off, what this "opera" might be to deserve such beauty. Before you fell asleep you imagined that specially adorable mother scintillating under glittering candelabra, walking down long avenues with robed kings to eat gigantic pink ices. Perhaps there was lemonade in gold jugs! The stories you heard in the morning when you crept into her bed saying, "Tell me about it," only helped to elevate Covent Garden in your

small mind as the ideal setting for the annual general meeting of the Knights of the Round Table.

By the time you go to Covent Garden you are, however, old enough to know that brilliance is a matter of men and women, not balustrades; and you realize that the entrance to it is sufficiently dull to be entirely distinguished.

As you escape a hearty slap of welcome from the door, you find the foyer packed with people. Queen Victoria would have come rapidly to the conclusion that there had been much burglary in Mayfair. King Edward, too, would have done some thinking; but we, who since those times have sold the old home, the acre, and the cow, know that the pawnbroker still has great grandmother's diamond tiara. (So does everybody else, so what does it matter?)

Now and then among the chattering crowd you observe some tenacious old lady crowned with what seem suspiciously like real diamonds; there are scores of beautiful young girls, scores of pink young men in various stages of intellectual apprehension, and one or two smart American society girls who know the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, the Scala

in Milan, and now stand thrilled by the historic social echoes of Covent Garden.

Moving through the crowd are also those queer people whom grand opera seems to draw out into the world from some paradise of memory: odd little old ladies in embroidered kimonos and panama hats, strange little old men, who prepare to abandon themselves to this feast of song as the gourmet abandons himself to the first oysters of the season.

A bell!

From the precipice of a stage box you look out and realize that the opera house itself is a wonderful sight. The great scarlet and gold amphitheatre sweeps round in a majestic curve, tier piled on tier, and in the topmost tiers people who love opera and do not care who sees them. This is the scene of the most gorgeous public assemblies in the social history of London. Gradually the scarlet stalls fill; slowly the boxes are occupied . . . the gleam of a woman's shoulders, in the shadow behind, the whiteness of a man's shirt front. Every second a green or a white or a blue evening gown obliterates a patch of crimson as a stall is taken, so eventually the great theatre loses its original color and becomes an interesting moving mass

of many tints. Little pearl-handled opera glasses are employed:

"Oh, there's Lady X. How old she's getting. . . . Who's that red-headed girl with Colonel Z?"

The orchestra begins to sigh and moan and whinny. It sits spread out beneath the crimson curtains bathed in a ghostly light from strip lamps over music stands. Dozens of violinists try their bows, dozens of brass and wood wind artists blows discreet preliminary toots, a drummer gives a sudden "pong" to his drum and silences it immediately as you hush a tinkled glass.

Little stray bits of Wagner break through the orchestral impatience; small curly prophecies, then—silence! The conductor enters; the audience applauds him; he bows, taps his stand with a baton, and suddenly the great orchestra wades tearfully into "God Save the King," playing it with a slow, German accent. A curious moment. . . .

The lights go down; the first few rows of stalls are bathed in a red glow from the crimson curtains as if in a light from Valhalla. A roll of drums. A settling down all over the dim bowl, and who knows what delicious antici-

pation or what grim determination to keep awake. . . .

The heavy curtains part; there is a swelling up of great music, and then—a voice.

IX

I HAVE seen the moon rise up over the Nile, starlight in the silence of the desert, the strong sun lying over flat African roofs, and many times from the summit of cold mountains I have watched dawn come slowly. But the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew in Bluebell Time. . . .

Travel the world, spend a fortune hunting beauty, and I do not think the earth will give you a lovelier sight than the Bluebell Walk in the freshness of morning. It is Bluebell Sunday, the papers remind you; and so, with a Sabbath hush over the streets of London, you take the Subway to Kew and pass into a paradise of shaven lawns and fresh green trees. What peace! The sounds we townsmen live with cease. The air is full of small winged noises and the bushes are alive with sudden rustlings. Through the sunlit morning, like a pattern in gold brocade, runs a constant trickle

of bird song, from tree to tree, song and reply, thrush to thrush, blackbird to blackbird. . . .

Happiness is in the air; the warm contentment of natural living things. A thrush, like a little frog, tugs a worm from the grass; on a still lake a swan moves, a silver line lengthening behind her as she swims; a small red-billed bird seems to propel itself through the water with much nodding of an ebony head; two yellow butterflies flicker above a flower.

Perhaps you have noticed that a certain eighteenth-century formality lingers on at Kew; small temples, little walled nooks where satyrs smile in gray stone, so that turning a corner, you half expect to see a pair of sophisticated eyes over a flirted fan and a gallant with blood-red heels to his buckled shoes singing an ancient, but never unfashionable, song.

Over long grass, through a dell, up a slight incline starred with daisies. On a seat two people holding hands and watching a gray squirrel make sudden scurryings in a tree as it observes them with its boot-button eyes. She has flaring bobbed hair and the sun sets fire to it, and he is a pale, poetic young man who, I am sure, has no idea of the temper saving up for him in that red glory. How beautiful Titian hair

looks among trees! It must have caused a lot of trouble in Arcady.

Bluebell Walk. . . .

On either side of a railed path is a lake of blue lying under the dappled cool tunnel of tall trees. It is overpowering in its beauty. It is a knee-high mist of blue. In certain lights there is an optical illusion of a haze above the mist. The millions of tiny bells lie massed together, following the lie of the land, barred with sunlight that falls through the leaves above, in shadow dark, in light startlingly blue, like wisteria.

Unforgettably English. The very soul of an English Spring. In the heart of it all is surely Titania and her small elves Puck and Mustard Seed. . . .

Up and down the railed path walk all kinds of people: girls admiring the scene in polite phrases, young men, some of whom say it is "pretty," many comfortable matrons who look at fairyland, so it seems to me, as they would look into Jevons and Jones's window on a sale day, and one exceedingly Sundayfied woman built like a *prima donna* who wears black gloves and looks neither to right nor to left. . . .

I long for Pelleas and Melisande to come

along in their Sunday clothes and kiss for sheer joy; I ache for the armies of Oberon to advance and storm our dullness.

Outside Bluebell Walk the flowers hold a kind of overflow meeting. They lie in sloping blue carpets under the trees. I watch a small child walk through them up to his chest. A fat child with wide blue eyes. He stoops heavily, picks up a twig and slowly attempts to throw it at a robin. The robin knows that he is not sufficiently a man to be dangerous and merely flashes off a few feet.

Far off, through cottonwool as usual, I hear a muffled "Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!"

Families go by with their luncheon in hampers, a competent-looking young girl sets up an easel, takes out paints, runs her hand through her short hair, and begins to paint with an I'll-show-those-bluebells expression. I hope she does!

On the seat beside the squirrel's tree the red-haired girl and her poet are still looking into one another's eyes. The squirrel has lost all fear; it plays round their feet, sitting up before them, its tiny gray hands against its fluffy stomach. They do not see it. They are looking into one another's eyes as if there only will

they find the end of all journeys, the Land of Heart's Desire. . . .

I hope they are right!

X

CYNTHIA is to be presented at Court next Thursday.

The large gilt card in her bedroom, on which the Lord Chamberlain has been commanded to invite her to Buckingham Palace, is now exercising a mesmeric power. Fearsome card! Only two more days! Sometimes Cynthia pulls a face at it and turns its gold letters to the wall. Behind it she sees the face of the Lord Chamberlain regarding her with something between contempt and horror, as though she had appeared at Court in a pink nightdress—as last week she dreamt she did. . . .

It seems only yesterday that Cynthia came back from school with hockey clubs and thick ankles. Now, in the mysterious way these things happen, she is slender and beautiful and —a débutante. Some débutantes prefer a dry Martini to a Manhattan, but Cynthia justifies the legend of girlish innocence which has grown up round the word. On Thursday her small

white satin shoes will take their first step into life.

In the Autumn, maybe, we shall see her come out of St. Margaret's Church with the bells pealing, so little and white and young, with some unworthy fellow—lucky dog!—leading her out of the shallows into the deeps and perils of life.

If you know her, her warm sympathy, her touch of wildness balanced by the tradition of "playing the game" (which conceals so much misery later on), and realize that she will not be able to deal with life for quite a long time, you will watch this process of stepping out with a queer mixture of admiration and fear. Little Cynthia. . . .

All manner of people have been schooling her to make that essential genuflection to the King and Queen. Débutantes have been in training for months: English girls; American girls who are being presented by the American ambassadress; girls from all countries presented officially by the wives of their ambassadors. The dance schools of Mayfair are packed with them. Blasé buds, some of them. Blushing is not in their line. The old days have gone when a débutante felt that she would be sent to the Tower if one plume was out of place. A Victorian or

an Edwardian débutante could blush, but few of the Georgians can. This twittering feeling has been much overdone. Cynthia tells me that two girls she knows are going to a dance on the eve of the Court. Shades of grandmother!

Cynthia has been learning to curtsey since March.

As she progressed, the dancing mistress would pin a tulle veil to her shoulders and Cynthia, very solemn, walked over the parquet floor towards two empty chairs occupied by the ghost of royalty. Other débutantes watched, playing the part of the Court. Opposite the first chair Cynthia sank in the way she was told. ("No, don't bend your head!") Two gliding steps to the right and another sinking earthwards. ("Be quite natural, and do remember your right foot. Good! You're perfect!")

So Cynthia agreed till quite recently; but that terrifying gilt card with all it stands for has got on her nerves! Suppose something goes wrong on Thursday. Suppose her shoe buckle catches up in her train and she cannot become perpendicular again; suppose . . . . Poor Cynthia! . . .

"Don't be a silly ass," says Harold. "Of course you won't fall down. Look here, I'm the

King, and you go over there and come in. . . . Now—down you go. . . ."

She curtseys gravely to her brother who, at the critical moment holds out a hand and says:

"Well, I'm mighty glad to have you know me. . . ."

From this point the rehearsal departs from Court etiquette!

Such tremblings and flurryings, such a going and coming of dressmakers, such visits to photographers and to Bond Street, where women, who seem a neat compromise between a musical comedy actress and a hospital nurse, conjure up complexion out of pots. . . .

Each one of Cynthia's small nails will be a work of art in itself, pink, shining. The girls who will fuss over her in the last hours will, some of them, assist her towards perfection with the same romantic enthusiasm with which every woman helps to pin-up every bride. Going to Court! Something of the fairy-tale princess lingers here. The starting point of romance.

When the little manicurist has done her work she may

think awhile of Cynthia radiant, going on towards the Throne, wonder what it feels like to be Cynthia, to be stepping into grandeur, white and wonderful with spread train.

We know it is more than this . . . much more dangerous, for on Thursday Cynthia steps out into life.

XI

THURSDAY comes and Thursday goes. . . .

"Come along, Cynthia; tell me how it feels to be launched in society!"

"Well, my dear, the most awful moment of all was when about thirty of us were let through by an usher, and I knew that in a few minutes I would have to be making my famous curtsey to the King. It was a dreadful crush that smelt of bath soap and powder, and I squeezed myself up small and held my train over my arm.

"Mother thought I was feeling collapsible—you know what she is—and she kept up a maddening stream of anecdote about King Edward's first Court and how Queen Alexandra looked, and how everybody thought that bouquets were to be banned because they took up too much room. All the time she kept looking

at me sideways to see if I was all right. I hate being watched. I began to feel that I was swelling, that something was coming down, or off, and that my nose was like a beacon fire. Isn't it awful when people expect you to be nervous? . . .

"Right in front of me was a handsome idiot in some kind of cavalry regiment, who was wearing everything but a spear. My dear, he clanked, and he bristled with little sharp spiky Christmas tree decorations. A public danger! I knew that if he sidestepped his spurs would be all tangled up in me, and so I just squeezed up small and leant back on the chest of a fat little man. . . . It was most amusing! You know when the Underground trains are full up, and some one shuts the gate and they let you past in batches? You know? Well, it was like that, on a much grander scale going on, say, in heaven.

"We were in the last antechamber! We could hear things happening in the Throne Room. One awful thing occurred. A débutante lost her chaperon! I don't know what happened to her, but anyone feeling dramatic in Court dress is pathetic. Am I boring you?"

"Not much."

"Well, I'll come to the exciting part. I was

in the Throne Room. It was my turn next. For one second I felt like running away. You know how quickly your brain works when something like this is happening? I had a kind of swimmy vision of enormous chandeliers, scarlet carpets, flowers, crowds of satisfied people through an opposite door and the King and Queen standing in the centre of a perfectly gorgeous group.

"There were men in white satin breeches holding white wands. Some one took my card, and some one else, ever so neatly, took control of my train, spread it out on the floor, and I found myself walking towards the King. The King, the Queen, and Me! Everything seemed arranged for this. . . . I heard my name read out. The Lord Chamberlain, who was standing on the King's left, announced me deliberately and had a good look at me. As I curtseyed—and in the emotion of the moment I did a lower one than I'd been practising, and it came off marvelously—I had a sight of the King and the Queen that I shall never forget. He was in Life Guards' full dress, but, of course, you know all that! The Queen was too gorgeous for words. She took my breath away. . . .

"I took two glides to the right, curtseyed

again, and the Queen smiled. You know that smile—it's simply lovely. It cannot be photographed. . . .

"I walked on: it was over! I forgot my train till a page returned it to my arm. Then I looked back for a minute. Girls in white coming through that nervy door, being presented and coming on towards me, and round the King and Queen all kinds of amazing uniforms. . . .

"Then we went into the supper rooms.

"All the old women were talking about their young days when they had to curtsey to every royalty on the platform and then back out, train and all.

"What did Muzz say? Well, when we got home she looked at me like an eagle regarding its young, and said, 'Of course, you're awkward, my dear. All you young girls are!' which, of course, was great praise from her, and meant that I had behaved beautifully. . . ."

XII

EVERYBODY is there.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones and the baby. Alfred and Ethel from Streatham, Lord This and Lady That. Every American in London is

there, for the United States Army polo team is out to "put it across" a Hurlingham side, and there is to be some fun. You can feel it in the air. And also on the air is borne the voice of some one's lovely daughter, now and then a nice New England purr, and occasionally a "Why, it's just *dandy!*" and a genuine F.F.V. laugh.

The great broad green polo ground, wide as an ocean of turf, close clipped as a tennis lawn, and sweet after recent mowing, divides the great crowd. On one side the white pavilion, packed with Hurlingham and its friends; on the other side high public stands packed with London's newest enthusiasts—those members of the public who have discovered the best game in the world. . . .

A bell tolls. . . .

The band of the Horse Guards, tucked away among a mountain of people, stops playing Chauve-Souris; pretty girls in their best Hurlingham-Ranelagh gowns cease to fascinate young men—yes, really—and a pony whinnies from the trees at the back. American army grooms unrug four tense little ponies. English grooms give a last tug to the girths of four equally tense little ponies; the umpire

mounts, fills his pockets with polo balls, and canters out into the field.

"Oh, daddy, which are the Americans?"

"Those four in white singlets!"

"And the Hurlingham team in light blue?"

"Yes."

Crack!

Crisp across the field comes the first smack as the umpire casts the ball among the eight dancing nervous ponies, and then. . . .

Then ding-dong, hell for leather, for a solid hour, all the thrills of a cavalry war, all the speed of baseball, all the skill of football and cricket and tennis and hockey boiled down, concentrated and spread out like jam over an English field.

The white ball flies forward, the eight men after it; it flies back, and, quick as flashes, the little ponies turn and follow. Their eyes are on the ball; they prick their ears as if desperately anxious to catch the sound of it, to foresee its turns and twists. Men and horses are one in this amazing chase of the white ball. There is a sudden bunch-up near the goal, a clicking of sticks, and the ball gets free; an American gallops up and cracks it toward the white posts; the crowd stops breathing; a Hurlingham pony leaps round like a cat; there is

a flash of a polo stick; the goal is saved, and the crowd shouts its joy. . . .

Then a gallop down field, a player well ahead with the ball, a race after him, a miss; he cracks it a good smashing blow and—goal! Then a bell calls them in! The first chukker is over! From beneath the trees eight fresh, prick-eared ponies are led out, and the eight little spring-heeled heroes of the first fight come trotting in with wet withers.

Look round! Under the trees the first ponies are patted and congratulated by their grooms. They are being rubbed down and unsaddled and rugged-up and fussed. Now and again they twist their cunning little heads towards the field as if following the fortune of that glorious mad battle, as if anxious to see how their pals are serving their men.

A groom pats them, rubs a hand over a velvet muzzle, and whispers something. . . .

The last chukker!

America 10, Hurlingham 6! Come on, Hurlingham! The tense crowd hears above the thunder of drumming hooves and the click of sticks sharp cries from the teams ("Leave it!"—"Take it!"—"Forward!"), and when the ball is hit to the line it sees a sudden rush of eight men, leaning in the saddle as they wheel, their

faces shiny with sweat and their eyes wide with the crazy rush of the game.

Then a player gets away with the ball. Oh, well ahead! See his pony all out after it, tail straight, head stretched, legs flashing! Then behind him gallops another! On he comes! Full tilt. He overhauls him! Gains on him yard by yard! You can hear the hooves drumming, see little clods of black earth torn up from the smooth turf, feel the miracle of mind and muscle that is driving those two out to head the ball. . . . Almost neck to neck now, flying, riding like furies, with the white ball just ahead. Then the second pony gallops level, presses its damp haunches into the first pony; the men lean together, shoulder to shoulder, their polo sticks ready for a hit, and on they career, shouldering, pressing, their galloping horses neck to neck, thundering over the turf on a loose rein, and then there is a swerve, the ponies part, the first player is ridden off, and the ball is headed back! The team wheels round ready for another race, then . . .

Ding-dong! Ding-dong!

The bell! The game over! America wins!

Little heroes of the polo field walk to stables, and what they say to each other as they nose their well-earned feeds I'll leave to you. . . .

XIII

IT IS the eve of the Derby. Sixteen miles southwest of London they are preparing the stage for the greatest drama of the racing year. . . .

Over Epsom Downs, a glory of sun, big clouds, wheeling, caravans yellow and green with shafts in the gorse. . . .

A police sergeant stands with his thumbs in his belt, the advance guard of a great army of authority, directing the tent makers and the carpenters to their places; and when the gipsies are not looking at him he looks at them, as a dog looks at an uncertain cat. I alone on that which will soon be the world's battle field of hope, stand beside the winning post, and wonder . . . wonder . . . wonder what half the world is wondering—who is going to win the Derby. Suppose I could tell for certain the name that will rocket up on this spot in a few days' time, how the world would love me! But no; I stand there, wrapt in commonplaces, thinking of the thousands of pounds that will be lost and won among the dandelions regarding the placid, empty stands, the white rails, the uneven switch-back of the course, and the critical curve of

Tattenham Corner. A little girl is picking daisies on the course; there is a sound of hammering from the right, and from the left the tinkle of beer bottles unloaded from a van.

How dead the Derby course is, how difficult to realize that within four days they will be thinking about it in the Congo, in the back blocks of Australia, in the South Sea Islands—wherever there is a Briton to "get up" a sweepstake! How unconscious it is of human affairs; the two butterflies that flicker low over the grass seem at that moment of more consequence than the unknown winner of the race.

I come out among the gorse bushes. As soon as I appear on the skyline there is a scattering round the nearest caravan, and I see a baby hurriedly given a place in the forefront of a sitting group of women. I go on as if unconscious of the scene staged for me. Then, outstretched arms, a sudden dancing around me of ragged boys and the old cry:

"You'vealuckyficesir . . . yesyouavesir . . . aluckyficesir . . . crossthebabieshandwithsilversir . . . . goonsir . . . . dosir . . . such a luckyficesir . . ."

I do then a totally unexpected thing which never fails to astonish the nomads; I sit down

calmly, facing them, and say not a word. The clamor dies at once.

The matron holding the baby narrows her eyes as she watches me, the four small, ragged boys slink to the caravan, and the two younger women look from the matron to me and back again. I feel that if I made a sudden movement the whole group would scuttle away. There is not a sound. Then I judge the moment ripe to win them. I tell the old lady (she is probably thirty-seven) that we are old friends, which is quite true. I remind her that the last time we met I had just been "done out" of my rights, and that a "dark stranger" was responsible. This she claims to remember. I then intimate that I am good for exactly half a crown (and not two and sixpence halfpenny), and very soon we are drinking exceedingly unpleasant tea. . . .

Yes, they'd come down from Nottingham, and Ethel is going to sell umbrellas. How she hopes Derby Day will be wet! The matron will tell fortunes as usual, and someone referred to as "him" intends to put up a coconut shy.

"You've got such a lucky fice, sir. I'd like to read your hand. . . . Ah, yes; you had a big disappointment before you met the young lady;

but now you've married that's all right, isn't it, sir?"

I say it is.

A small boy, wearing what once had been a tall man's tail coat, appears from behind a bush, and remarks, "Me father says could anyone spare a pipe of tobacco." One of the lads near the caravan throws a biscuit tin at the envoy, which means that the answer is in the negative. Some more women come out of the caravan. One named Agnes is not a real gipsy: she is having a holiday. Her real profession is fern seller to the suburbs. She exchanges young aspidistras for old trousers. Then comes Kent and the hops, with the Derby in between, most profitable of all, when she retails a liverish brew of lemonade in a large fish tank. What a crew of varied commercial interests! Ethel praying for rain, Agnes praying for a thirsty day, and the rest ready for anything!

What Agnes would do without the Derby she doesn't know—straight, she doesn't! Ferns is no good, hopping is exhausting, but the Derby —that *is* something like, that is!

There is a clatter of hooves. A score of shaggy ponies with manes tossing clatter over the road to the grass, and, behind them, something beautiful holding a switch cut from the

hedge. She is about eighteen, red-haired, freckled and most adequately constructed.

"Damn your eyes, John!" she says, "for letting them ponies——" Then she sees me, pauses, ends and sits down, confused. Everybody laughs. She blushes. (I wonder how she would look in a Paris gown.) She lifts and drops her eyes, very blue. Her feet are in unlaced boots. It is difficult to realize how beautiful she really is. I wonder how she got there. She looks all wrong. That red and white beauty is surely a dangerous thing to trundle round in a caravan. For one second perhaps I feel like King Cophetua, and then (how inartistic life is) I notice that her lovely neck is tidal. . . .

"Give me a penny!" shout the boys as I go.

"Come back, can't yer!" snarls the old woman. "Let the gentleman go!"

Some kind of good breeding, I think, allows the parting guest to part in peace.

But that red head in the wood smoke! What a waste!

XIV

NOW for the Derby, that essence of England, that horrible, thrilling, amusing, revolting, exciting crush on Epsom Downs with the

white-bellied clouds sailing across a sky tattered with kites, the air vibrating with the hum of Man in his thousands.

The Derby is like nothing else in the London year. As an experience it is unpleasant; as a sight it is unique; as a memory it is indispensable. On one side of the course rise the packed stands, tier on tier. A strip of green with whitewashed rails and beyond the rolling miles of men and women blotting out the furze bushes and the grass, rising and falling with the sweep of the down; a crazy black pond of people from which rise up islands, in the form of grand stands, motor omnibuses, motor cars and the flimsy scaffolds of the bookmakers.

The monster has fifty thousand tongues in fifty thousand heads and a hundred thousand eyes and arms and legs. It twitches and writhes in uneasy movement and from it rises a bluish stream of tobacco and a steady buzz of sound, punctured now and then by the note of a cornet. This crowd cannot be exaggerated, cannot even be described, cannot be seen in its completeness. It is like a moment in the history of a tribe's migration when within sight of some promised land, the peoples have paused awhile to wait with song, dance and jellied eel, the judgment of their god.

"It's terrific," you say as your race-glasses move over the mass. "There is nothing else like it on earth."

"Isn't it a horrible monster?"

"Perhaps! It is vaguely repellent. It rather undermines one's faith in democracy; it is the essence of all incoherence."

An old man who says he has witnessed fifty Derbys chips in with reminiscence:

"It isn't the show it used to be fifty years ago, when we all came down by road and didn't care when or how we got home. We were a jollier crowd. We cared less about the winner than the outing. I remember Barnum, just over from America, walking about with Tom Thumb under his arm draped in a shawl. In those days the Derby was a great national fair. On the way home there was dancing on the village greens till late at night, and the crowds gathered to watch the coaches go by with their postilions. Many's the time I've seen King Edward when he was Prince of Wales drive four fine blacks to Epsom and back again. Now, of course, the motor car has altered the Derby as it has altered everything. We seemed happier people fifty years ago, or it may be that I was young then. Perhaps that's it!"

It is a few minutes to three.

From the paddock canter one by one the Derby runners. The note of the crowd drops an octave. The babel in Tattersall's goes on as the bookmakers make the last-minute bets. Easy, long-legged, pulling, nervous, the horses with their crouched jockeys like monkeys in colored jackets, canter across the grass past the grand stand, where the King directs his field glasses on them. The voice of the crowd leaps up again as the favorite comes along, his smooth gallop like the working of an oiled machine. They canter back and go far off to the starting point. After them trails a remnant of the multitude, a long, straggling line of running people led by one or two horsemen and horsewomen.

The voice of the crowd dins in the ears; the man with the cornet is playing something incredibly melancholy; the eyes of the grand stands are fixed on that far-off white gate where a line of color breaks and wavers. Suddenly the voice of the crowd drops. The voices of the bookmakers become hushed. That line far off is steady. The multitude which till now was an incoherent horror becomes in this tense second united, takes to itself a brain and a thought, and in its throat is the desire to shout those two exciting words, "They're off!"

But the line of color breaks and scatters, half the crowd roars these words; the other half does not, and there comes swiftly a blare of disappointment over the Downs. A false start! The horses trot back to the tape and the tense wait continues. Then . . .

"They're off!"

"They're OFF!"

That cry contains more thrill than anything in the racing year. It is the essence of excitement. It strings up the nerves. It rouses hope. It awakens fear. It stills the voice of the multitude.

The line of color far off at the starting point leaps into the distance. Horses and riders are lost for a moment behind the bodies of hundreds of thousands of massed men and women.

"There they go!"

A jet black line of bobbing heads is seen against the weeping sky, is lost again, is again found at the curve of Tattenham Corner. Now they enter the straight and are "all out" for the finish.

Names are shouted and flung from point to point. The line of color flashes on. The voice of the expectant pink monster rises jerkily, uncertain, almost angry.

No one will easily forget those crouching

riders, the horse ahead, two more neck and neck, the thunder of hooves, the flying clods of earth, and the voice of the crowd rising higher and higher, till, with a burst that rockets up to the clouds, the name of the winner crystallizes out of uncertainty.

So another Derby is over. Men and women shake hands like children, laugh, shout with pleasure, or, with philosophic smiles, start for homes and warm firesides.

JUNE: *You see the King on his birthday—you go to Eton on "the Fourth"—you take an American to Lord's—you have a tea party in Mayfair—you go to the Richmond Horse Show—to Ascot—some men take actresses to Maidenhead—you watch the International Horse Show—you go to Hendon and admire the Air Force Pageant*

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

JUNE

I

THE King has a birthday on the third of June, and he rides down the Mall to receive the prettiest birthday present the army can give him—Trooping the Colour.

The Mall is an avenue of sunlight ending in a real heat haze that flickers over Buckingham Palace. Crowds line both sides of the road. The broad steps of Waterloo Place fill quickly with such a packed mass of men and women that you could not throw a pin between them. Round me is a marvelous crowd. There are two Americans, a number of women from the suburbs who know everything about Royalty, a few ex-soldiers, and three Russians wearing red-topped caps, black breeches, and tussore blouses embroidered at the neck. This is the sort of thing I hear:

"Well, say what you like, this country's got a helluva kick to it. It certainly has. . . ."

"Do look, Alice, quick—there's Princess Arthur alone in that car!"

"Hi, Bill, who does that sergeant-major remind you of? Ain't it old Whisky Willie to the life? See that slope, that's the stuff to give 'em! How'd you like to be back in it, Bill? . . . I feel like that, too. This is my old sergeant's cane. I always take it out to these shows, and, although I'm a ruddy Socialist, if anybody said a word against the King I'd blinkin' well knock him down. That's that. . . ."

One of the three Russians says something that sounds like "Choodno, nie Pravda?" and the other replies, "Daas, nicheva," so that the militant Socialist turns quickly and asks me in a violent whisper, "What's that those blokes are speakin'?" When I say Russian he appears in no way soothed.

Listen! They are cheering lower down the Mall! By placing my face in half a pound of cold, indigestible cherries in a woman's hat I catch a glimpse of fluttering handkerchiefs.

Then a section of silver and scarlet Life Guards . . . then the King! He rides a big white, mettlesome charger. He smiles. He raises his white-gloved hand to his high black bearskin. Over his scarlet tunic is the blue ribbon of the Garter. On one side of him is the Duke of Connaught, on the other Marshal Foch, in the blue uniform of the French Army.

A man in the crowd springs to attention and shouts:

"Many happy returns, your Majesty!"

To a crisp clatter of hooves comes the most gorgeous cavalcade of the year—the Prince of Wales in Guards' uniform; Prince Henry in full-dress Hussar uniform, his charger saddled over a leopard skin; the military attachés of the foreign embassies and legations, vivid

alien uniforms, a Japanese Lancer, a Belgian cavalryman, a Spanish uniform, and sky-blue French. . . .

They pass on down the incline to the Horse Guards Parade, whence comes a rattle of musketry, and a sound of drums.

In the sudden flux of the crowd I find myself with one of the Americans, and we share my binoculars. Through them we see the cere-

mony, far off through the trees, backed by the lovely gray and black bulk of the Horse Guards, with the Queen and Princess Mary and the Duchess of York watching from a canopied window.

The King on his white charger, on either side of him a rank of horsemen, and, on the parade ground, company after company of Foot Guards; the sun over naked steel; the great blare of the massed bands; the slow march, the solemn Trooping the Colour. Then the time changes. Quick march! The troops pass the saluting base. First go the Life Guards with the soft tum-tumming of the cavalry drums and the tweedle of the fifes and wood wind; then go the Foot Guards. Suddenly the marching ceases. The bands play "God Save the King," the Colors are dipped to the dust. The parade is over.

"Say, what does all this link up with?" asks the American.

"George II," I tell him. "It's really the compliment of the Household troops to the Sovereign on his birthday. It's a kind of extra special version of the parade that goes on every day outside Buckingham Palace, St. James's Palace, and the Horse Guards. It just means that they salute the Flag in the presence of the

King, and, in a manner of speaking, parade their allegiance."

"That's great stuff!" says the American. "The wonderful thing about this country is that things mean something; there's something back of all this . . . something that gets you in the throat. Yes, sir. . . ."

The King places himself at the head of the Guards and is leading them back to the Palace. The Life Guards are going past!

"See those silver kettledrums on the fat drum horse? They were given by William IV! One of those bugles in the band sounded the charge at Waterloo. . . ."

The American makes incredulous noises, and I can see that he is "tickled to death."

The massed bands come crashing down the Mall. The King rides behind, leading the Guards, smiling to the crowds, touching his bearskin in salute. The troops pass. More horsemen.

"Look at that saddlery—the Grenadier Guards' saddlery—that was given to the regiment by the great Iron Duke!"

"Gosh!" says the American. "This thing's alive; it's got roots! No wonder you people feel these things in your throats, and I'm

mighty glad to have seen this—it helps to explain . . . means something . . . tradition . . ."

I feel that he is about to become sentimental. He has the idea, and, like a good American, he has it right between his teeth; and no one could have it better! So I say good-bye, and this perfectly good Republican then discovers that he has forgotten to replace his black felt hat!

II

THE next day is the Fourth of June.

If you possess an Etonian in your family do not miss "the Fourth," even though you may

belong to Harrow. If you are a foreigner looking at England persuade some member of the ruling classes to run you down with him, on the Fourth of June, to that lovely place where Windsor Castle on its hill looks over the Thames to those playing fields on which, we are assured on good authority, the battles of England have been won.

This is one of the most English events of the year; much more English than policemen, draughts, self-depreciation and the Cheshire Cheese Tavern. Eton College is the most famous school in England. It was founded by Henry VI in 1440. Harrow School does not admit Eton's supremacy and it was founded as recently as 1571. The "Fourth" is Eton's speech day..

"Darling boy!"

Mrs. Smith whispers it. She sweeps up to a small pink figure on the station at Windsor, and takes it for a second in her arms. The figure is Smith Minor! He wears a silk hat that looks like the legacy of a swollen-headed giant, and from the buttonhole of his funny little coat—a coat like an evening coat too young to have grown tails—springs a bloated carnation backed by a dell of maidenhair fern. His legs, increasing at the rate of four inches a

term, are in quite inadequate striped trousers which departed from his bony ankles months ago with a gesture that drew attention to the fact that his navy blue socks have been repaired by a lighter shade of wool. He carries a singularly virginal pair of bright yellow gloves.

"Darling boy!"

She whispers it as only mothers do; and Smith Minor, finding himself swiftly enveloped by arms and scent, turns pinker and looks round desperately. Heavens! Jones Major in the arms of a woman! Three lovely girls kissing Robinson, and all down the platform boys in silk hats plunging into shameless domestic affection as bathers take to the sea!

Then it *is* "done"!

He shakes hands with his father. Gray and rather grim, that father, standing there in a pool of hot sun on Windsor Station this Fourth of June, this day that Eton assembles her sons, old and young, famous and unknown. Very grim. Perhaps forty years have fallen from him . . . perhaps he is hearing another woman say those two words—as only mothers do—to *him:* to *him* in a funny little coat, a big silk hat, his lean haunches in short striped trousers. . . .

More beautiful than the daughters of Babylon are the sisters of Etonians. In a foam of

not much ninon, they surge so cool and delicious through the streets arm in arm with their own particular little black grub, or they pack themselves in victorias or in taxicabs, or they glide in long cars, and, always, wherever there is a foam of lace or a flutter of silk pleats there, somewhere, is a pink-eared boy in a big silk hat, the focus of admiration!

A sun that might have been ordered for this day shines (with luck) over the Thames, makes your silk hat stick to your head, turns spats into red-hot annoyances, and causes the green shade of elms and the grayness of weathered stone to be cool and gracious things.

Through the corridors of Eton drifts an unaccustomed trail of perfume, the tapping of light shoes. Past walls carved with names, each name like a voice from the past, into Upper School you go where the Sixth Form, in knee breeches, render "speeches" while you think pleasantly of luncheon. The inns of Windsor are loud with champagne corks as fathers act like men, and a flushed lordling in a tail coat issues an invitation to tea in his rooms where, he confides, there will be iced coffee, strawberries, chocolate cake and ice cream. . . .

Through a rather bloated afternoon you

stand with Smith Minor on Agar's Plough, and pretend to watch cricket.

But you will watch something else. Among the crowds you will see a noted admiral bow deferentially to a bent little country parson, and you have a shrewd instinct that the admiral used to fag for him and has not by any means forgotten! You see old men light up as other old men peer at them and take their hands. . . . "Do you remember? Do you remember?"

On this velvet soft grass, with the elms throwing shade, the Thames, in the boyhood of its course, clear and limpid and fresh, Windsor Castle above a clump of trees towering in battlements, how many years fly away, how many men go backward in time and stand again in that golden age of life before realities began?

Smith Minor, full of strawberry ice, but rallying gallantly, holds the mind to the present. A great day for him! In awed tones he points out his heroes; shyly he introduces his friends. Just watch the grimness go from his father's face as he shakes various small hands, and you feel that he is living over again everything Smith Minor says or does. A wonderful festival of Youth, with Age looking on understanding it all, loving it all.

Then, with an evening mist mounting and

the sun falling, the procession of boats, the crews in their quaint costumes, white duck trousers, beflowered hats . . . supper, fireworks! . . . It is now dark! From Fellows Eyot the trees look spectral, the night is warm, and still as a night in Venice, sweet with the smell of grass and flowers. Suddenly lights tremble on the water. The sky lights up. In a flash you see the crowd standing there watching in the darkness. Then intense blackness again.

Smith Minor feels his father's hand steal out in the darkness and go about his shoulder. Curious! The strong fingers grip. So curious. . . . Such a grim, gray father.

Against the sky a green star burns for a moment and falls in the night.

III

TWO minutes after the doctor informs the head of a great house that an heir has been born, the butler is rushing off to Lord's to put the infant's name on the long waiting list of the M.C.C. as the Marylebone Cricket Club is known. (On his way back he may remember to drop in on the Registrar of Births.) With luck the child is elected at the age of forty-five.

"You don't say!" says the young American. "I guess this Lord's Cricket Ground where we're going is a kind of country club to the House of Lords. Is that so?"

I have to explain to him that the genesis of Lord's had nothing to do with hereditary titles, that over a hundred years ago a man called Lord, realizing that it would be profitable to bring a field, a cricket match, and barrels of beer together, humbly laid the foundations of the most famous sporting institution in the world. I explain that butlers rush off to enter infants for the M.C.C. at the earliest possible moment because there is a waiting list as long as eternity.

"Well, I guess that guy Lord drew one of the lucky names in history," says the American. "I'll say he had a hunch for founding things in this country; he simply couldn't fail with a name like that. He might have been Robinson! D'you think he'd have put cricket over on a name like Robinson? I guess not. . . ."

We approach the gates.

Lord's is looking incredibly like Lord's. That emerald bowl of turf edged with darker trees, those glittering white rails, the pavilions, the startlingly clear, snow-white players, the bats-

men, the umpires, slow, ruminating, in their long white coats, the pretty run of the bowler, the flash of his arm, and, crack! the sweetest sound of June, the meeting of bat and ball!

In a circle round the field is the most delightful sports gathering in the world; an English cricket crowd. Keen, impartial, quiet and undemonstrative is your cricketer. So varied. At Lord's you may find yourself sitting next to a parson or to a man who in the interval will talk learnedly of philosophy or art, or you may meet a soldier home from abroad who has made straight for Lord's in order to taste again the flavor of an English day. You meet the City man stealing an hour from the office, happy as a truant schoolboy at having heard the sweet peal of the pavilion bell when he should have been behind his desk!

Slow and glorious is cricket, an antidote to the modern fever for speed, a dignified, clean game with a tradition behind it. As over follows over and the tension of the white field breaks as the players change positions the American absorbs the atmosphere:

"This is certainly English!" he says. "I've seen those old prints of guys in high hats playing this game. . . ."

"Do you like it?"

"You bet! It's great!"

The game goes on into the lazy, warm afternoon. The crowd lies quiet under the spell of it, smoking its pipe, talking between the overs of W. G. Grace and the great ones of the past.

"Oh, well hit, sir!"

"Good shot, sir!"

Those cries now and then following the sharp crack of a hit ball. That is all.

I become aware that my young American is growing restless. He had taken a deep and intelligent interest in the opening of the game, but his attention is now wandering. Signs of obscure mental anguish pass over his face when a batsman is bowled and the field sits down.

"If they could only take it quicker!" he whispers, pulling his flat-topped hat well over his eyes and lighting a cigarette.

A shout goes up from the crowd.

"What was that? I wasn't looking! Darn it all, I've sat here since I was ten with my eyes glued to those white pants and nothing's happened! Then the minute I look at a butterfly they pull off the only stunt of the day. It's not playing fair!"

Half an hour passes and I feel that it is not kind to keep him at Lord's any longer. An old man next to him has taken him in hand, and

is recounting ancient centuries. I catch the name of W. G. Grace.

"Crazy!" whispers the American in my ear. "He thinks he's been sitting here since 1875. Perhaps he's right!"

"Shall we go?"

"Sure thing," he says happily. Then he turns back and mutters with a determined, set face:

"Gosh, I just hate being done down by anything. I want to like this darned game, but I just can't. I don't get it. A bunch of wise-looking guys sitting around making polite alfresco tea-party noises to a funeral party in white ducks! No, sir, it's got me guessing. I'm sorry. There's something I don't see. . . ."

There is! But can you tell me how I might have made him see those sweet afternoons embalmed in every English heart when we, lying with the warm scent of crushed clover in our nostrils, watched in a breathless hush how the school was fighting—and two wickets to fall? Could I make him understand how we have all felt when caught in some small meanness of youth, our fathers have solemnly told us, "That's not cricket, my boy . . . that's not playing the game"? Could I have explained that no matter how old and dull we grow we

never quite forget what it felt like to wait in the pavilion with pads on, and then to walk out to that waiting field with a bat under our arm, our whole intense young being concentrated in a resolve to play the game?

"It's in the blood, I expect," I say lamely. "We're brought up to it."

"Well," he replies, thoughtfully, as we make our way out, "I guess that's it. It trains you up to be a great nation, that's sure! After the fatigue of watching that game a war's nothing. And that's a fact!"

IV

A TEA PARTY in Mayfair. There is no escape in June. . . .

Three footmen move stiffly over the Aubusson bearing tiny, corpse-like sandwiches on silver trays. Some contain unpleasant deposits of tomato; others feature cress which falls out, giving a bucolic touch to your chin; and some are inhabited by *foie gras*. A stern butler drifts about in the background like a Prussian general who is expecting reinforcements at any moment.

When you tell him your name he conveys to

you in some mysterious way that you are not the reinforcements expected. Nevertheless he magnanimously re-christens you in a loud voice, and under these false pretenses you enter a room that smells of scent, sounds of china being tinkled, and is full of people who have never before met discussing unimportances with a kind of passionate insincerity.

As you walk in like an early Christian martyr a well-upholstered woman disengages herself from a group of people who are pink with pretending not to bore each other. She is your hostess. She is dear Lady Maud Ffootle.

"I'm so glad you've come!" she says, and at the back of your mind you wonder if she knows who you are! Then, with a gesture, she introduces you to the crowd and you feel like a child being compulsorily bathed. The men are either so old that they can say anything to a woman of thirty-five without being offensive, or so young that you cannot establish any kind of mental contact. You retreat therefore to a couch covered with women where, holding a cup containing a slice of lemon and some good aromatic tea, you assume a sort of mordant gaiety as you nibble a sandwich and say, "Splendid!" before the person telling the story has reached the point of it.

"His Grace the Bishop of Boom!"

The butler's voice seems to be wearing a rich cope. You realize that the advance guard of those reinforcements has arrived! The bishop, exhaling a plump joy, walks into the mob like a black Buff Orpington and has soon shaken off everybody but the prettiest girl in the room.

"Lord Boodle!"

This time the butler's voice is trimmed happily in ermine; and you know that the anticipated reliefs have arrived.

Just as your wandering wits are returning and three handsome semidetached women obviously think you the wittiest thing in creation, your hostess sweeps up and with the air of confiding that a guest has forgotten to put on trousers (but will you be darlings and forget it because he's eccentric?) whispers apologetically that Poppy Delane, the actress, is about to recite verses composed by her when she was touring in America. Everyone feels that nothing could be more awful, yet each says, "How delightful!" puts down a cup, and assumes a tense, attentive expression.

Poppy Delane darts a side smile at the bishop and walks to a clear arena, before the fireplace. She is lovely. Adorable! (How you hate her!) She smiles in the unhealthy silence, raises a

hand, and seems listening to an inaudible bird. Then she recites.

You feel that you must keep a tight hold on yourself. The poem is like a frenzied assault on your sense of humor. How ghastly if you should go mad and begin to dance by yourself, or start to undress. What a poem!

America, America land of the free,
Blazoning hope from sea to sea,
O land of opportunity . . .

It becomes worse and worse. You find yourself aching to roll on the floor or creep under a table, but instead you gaze into Poppy's eyes with a peculiar intensity which gives her the insane impression that you alone of all men understand and appreciate her art. With a passionate gesture she addresses the next stanza to you, so that, hating to be embroiled in any way—even by mistake—you swiftly shift your eyes and find yourself looking at an abandoned cress sandwich with a yearning wistfulness, as if you were about to propose marriage to it. By thinking of cress hard you manage to control your emotion . . . cress, running water, country lanes, waving greennesses under the water, the postman cycling down the muddy road, the parson in a dogcart. . . .

"Bravo!" some one cries. "Bravo!" Thank heaven, Poppy has finished! There is a rustle of mild applause. The bishop welcomes her back as he might be expected to welcome a distinguished convert; Lord Boodle's monocle falls with a tiny tinkle to his waistcoat and he ceases giving an imitation of a sentimental cream bun. Everybody relaxes. It was the longest ten years of their lives.

The conversation leaps up again in splendid insincerity. People are playing conversational ping-pong. You resolve to stand up, button your morning coat, unobtrusively shake the trouser leg that always hitches up over your left spat and retreat in good order, but, alas! dear Lady Maud advances to you over that Aubusson prairie. There is no use in pretending to take cover. You are in for it; you are about to encounter Number One of the June Crop of Performing Seals.

"I want you to meet Boris Grubbski—you two will get on well!"

You try to grip a hand that feels like a pound of warm filleted plaice, and behind the hand is a limp body and a pair of dopey Slavonic eyes which makes you wish that you had brought a gun. He may be twenty or thirty. It is impossible to say. There is a faint whisper

of amber. His eyes drape you in velvet for a moment, he adopts a relaxed attitude, shakes a lock of dank hair from his forehead, and, without any decent preliminary, begins mentally undressing himself. He tells you about his soul, and prods around in it as urchins grub in rubbish heaps on waste land.

"You believe in reincarnation?" he says intensely. "I *know!*" He sighs and nods his head. "I am a very old soul."

("A very rotten old soul," you think.)

"And so are you," he remarks, shaking that Medusa head.

("If," you wonder, "I threw a jam tart at him, what exactly would happen to this lovely tea party?")

The long room glows with afternoon sunlight and is sweet with a movement of green leaves through open windows. Midmost in the throng of women is dear Lady Ffootle, a lovable soul if ever there was one, a childless woman who, in default of the normal target for affection, must mother the entire universe. She is like a searchlight that, denied the object of its focus, shoots out over the sky. One little pink baby could have stopped all these tea parties years ago, could have denied the Society for the Conversion of Chinese Carpenters, the Society for Pro-

viding Steam Heat in Iceland, the Overcoats for Stray Cats' Society—and many more—large annual cheques. But no; she is doomed to move on in intolerable sweetness. I often wonder when she will provide the worms in her lawns with little hot water bottles (poor darlings!). She is the charity secretary's dream of heaven.

Her mind, like one of those annoying Japanese glass harps, tinkles to every wind that blows, particularly from the direction of the Steppes—"So pathetic, my dear, such lonely, locked-away people, such pent-up sorrow, such is-ness, such was-ness."

Hence frequent versions of Boris. . . .

There is an expectant rustle from the assembled women. Big hats, little hats, turn the way of Boris, tea cups in white hands, and through the room passes the unavoidable knowledge that he is about to perform. Dear Lady Maud leads him to a grand piano, hovers a moment, fussing. Boris runs his hand through his hair, moons at the reverent women, and finally strikes the piano with quite surprising hatred. Rachmaninoff! Brahms! Quite good; but not better than they do it in any London music school every day. At the final chord the nervous hands fall from the keys, a pallor spreads over the artist's face, and he subsides into a soft

chair and takes a cup of tea with the wan smile of an invalid. In a corner a famous vaudeville magnate, cornered by altruistic Lady Ffootle lies gallantly.

"Gorgeous!" "Magnificent!" "Oh, my dear, what expression!" All this from the scented rustle! You long to bleat, but this is one of those uncritical, mesmeric moments when it is not worth while telling the truth!

"Amazing fellow!" you say quickly to every pair of burning eyes you encounter. Then:

"Hallo, Joan!"

"Hallo! What an awful young man!"

"How did you guess? Women never seem to size up these things."

"Oh, but don't we? My dear, he cornered me, looked at me lusciously, and told me he never would love any woman for more than twenty-four hours."

"What did you throw at him?"

"I inferred that he was generally flung out long before his affection had time to develop."

"Why do you come to these affairs?"

"Who wouldn't back up dear Aunt Maud? If she took up performing fleas and had them loose I'd come; and so would you!"

Then the face of the genius looms before you. He is bearing down on you wearing a

buttered smile. He wants you to know some more about his soul! As he approaches he seems to tear off a spiritual coat and waistcoat and wave them in the air. In a moment he will be undressed again trying to have a Turkish bath in your polite sympathy.

"Good-bye, Joan!"

You dodge him, reach the door, long for a custard pie, and dive down the steps into this mad world.

V

HOW splendid it is.

Once every June the Richmond Horse Show gives us poor Londoners (who don't know the neck from the croup of an omnibus) the chance of pretending that once we hunted twice a week and lived the only sane life for a man; with a trout stream to fish, a horse to ride, and a dog to love, and . . . well, that's surely enough? As soon as you enter the gates and walk out on the grass at Richmond, London might be a hundred miles away. You might be in the heart of green Warwickshire, on one of those lovely, slumbersome afternoons when the horse show is held in a paddock and all the farmers and their

lads and all the girls and men from country houses are mixed up in a delirious horse-worshipping mass dominated by the spare, straddle-legged figure of his lordship with a pink carnation in his shooting jacket and a straw in his mouth, feeling fetlocks, rubbing hocks, generally having his own way, ruling the roost as he rules the hunting field.

The joy about the Richmond Horse Show is that it might be taking place in the depths of Somerset or Devon, instead of on the fringe of London. It brings a breath of the shires to this sophisticated city. It is true to type. It is the prettiest, most happy-go-lucky open-air lounge in the London season. You pay your money and sit round waiting for something to happen. As soon as you arrive you "get" the atmosphere. Even the Cockney chauffeurs who have run down with cargoes of Mayfair begin to look a bit like Tom, the stableboy who was always so clever at engineering!

It is terribly hard work to make the Richmond Horse Show seem like a society function. There are too many good horses, and too many country cousins, and too many bandy-legged grooms and sharp-faced men in white stocks. A silk hat here and there, a white Ascot "topper," Lady So-and-So (in a flutter of green pleats)

and the beautiful Miss So-and-So (in a flutter of apricot pleats) look smart and attractive; but—who cares? This is a horse show. All you desire to see is the red rosette pinned to the right head collar!

Everywhere you look, everywhere you go, you meet our lovely country cousins wearing their riding breeches. A girl in riding breeches and boots is either one of the most beautiful sights on earth or one of the most regrettable. She can, if she has thin legs and the right cut boot, look like every man's ideal girl, the kind of girl for whom he would adore to open every gate in every field in every county in England; on the other hand, if she is fat and knock-kneed; but why brood on this?

Come! something is happening in the ring. . . .

You lean over the rails with a crowd from Taunton, Ayrshire, the Cotswolds and Park Lane, watching twelve little girls on twelve little ponies walk, trot, and canter past the judges. Deliciously composed infants, the ponies in scale with them, little women on little horses.

Then the single harness ponies! See them leaping as if they would shatter the frail racing buggy, see them change step, get into their

stride, and with heads up and legs stepping—legs on springs—stride off over the turf. Such perfection, such a display of swift energy. In the middle of this sounds the mellow call of a coach horn. The coaches which have been allowed sixty minutes from the Magazine in Hyde Park are coming in! The sun gleams on a lemon-yellow coach body. Far over among the trees there is a blur of red, the coat of the "guard"; the light gleams on the smooth chestnut flanks of the team and slowly, heavily over the turf, comes the first coach with a bright jingle of harness. . . .

You go through the long marquee called "stables."

Grooms, fussier than any lady's maid, are winding fetlock bandages or unwinding the cloth from tails pulled as only an English groom can pull a tail. In one box a girl in riding breeches and a white dust coat is whistling as she runs a hay wisp over her horse.

Soft muzzles are pushed through the box sides; deep-lashed eyes gaze at you mildly, as if such fussing and brushing and bandaging were a peculiar trait of humanity which must be tolerated. Then the time comes when a horse is saddled and led out. His mistress

mounts him; and off they go into the arena to try their skill, to match their points.

You, who must return to the city, linger pathetically round the tailor's stall, finger a shooting stick, feel a Bedford cord, and, quite against your will, tear yourself violently away from a man who very nearly sold you a pair of brown Jodhpur breeches. . . .

There is something about horses and horse shows that *always* pulls you back to the land!

VI

Ascot!

We call it "Royal Ascot"; and the name is a good one. Since the days of Queen Anne, who knew a race horse when she saw one, the Kings and Queens of England have fostered the famous week on Ascot Heath, six miles from Windsor. With Ascot the "Season" reaches its climax. To miss Ascot is to miss the "Season"; to go to Ascot is to see either one of the most colorful scenes of the London year or the most gallant. If the day is wet, as it often is, the spectacle of thousands of women cheerfully becoming soaked to the skin in their newest gowns, and thousands of men wearing silk hats

like drowned cats, is one that cannot fail to create in the mind of the visitor a deep respect for English grit!

I have been to Ascot in Lady Dinglederry's car and once, most conspicuously, in Colonel Blood's yellow four-in-hand, but the greatest fun of all is to go in a pair of old flannel trousers on the free side of the Heath.

How can I make you see that wonderful comedy of changing scene? If only I could paint! In a tent I watch a woman with three chins eating frozen salmon from a tin plate. In a corner of the tent two babies with hot, red faces are asleep with a sack flung over them, their yellow hair lying among crushed daisies. A man comes in and takes up a pint pot of red ale. He lifts the pot and pours the ale down his throat. You can see it going down. His eyes goggle over the brim at people. Then he puts the pot down empty.

"Salmon's good to-day!" cries the fish merchant, picking up great chunks of it, slicing it, and placing it on tin plates.

"Who says jellied eels?" yells his rival outside.

A man with his face painted black comes in, flings out one arm dramatically, and begins to sing in an incredibly vile voice:

"I per-assed by your wi-in-dow
When the morning was red."

Somebody tells him to come back in the evening, but he is taking no hints. He clears the tent, and is succeeded by a blind man led by a little white wisp of a woman. The blind man begins to sing, but the woman touches his sleeve.

"Save yer voice, dear, save yer voice!" she says. "There ain't nobody here."

And this is Ascot, fashionable Ascot! Over on the other side of the rails, the royal enclosure is slowly filling; the green lawns are dotted with bright parasols.

Outside in a blaze of light is the blare of a crowd. Something happening on every yard of earth. Tipsters! What a study in persuasion!

"Money?" cries one seedy-looking fellow. "It's nothing to me . . . nothing . . . just dirt! I don't want it! I only want to put you people right. . . ."

And a row of stolid faces comes a step nearer.

"'Ere, catch this!" cries another, as three half-crowns flash through the air. "I've got a lot more where that came from."

"Jockeys?" says a third in a voice of infinite

contempt. "Some tipsters call themselves jockeys, come 'ere dressed up like chorus girls with two left-hand leggings on! Jockeys! And you believe them! You fool. . . ."

Quite near a husband and wife are in the course of an argument. Would the baby in a tin bath elicit greater sympathy from passersby here by the tent door or over there beside the road?

One o'clock! The crowds press at the white rails opposite the royal enclosure. Women in hundreds! The hot sun beats down. The note of an arriving coach-and-four! A man sells ice bricks, another advertises the contents of a tin bath on whose bilious waters float sliced lemons . . . and a constant babble from the crowd.

"That's where the 'big pots' are, Mary!"

"Ow, don't they look lovely? All lords, 'spect!"

"Lords?" says a man's voice in deep scorn. "Dooks! Most of 'em is dooks."

"Go on!" says a woman.

The elegant people from the other side of Ascot continually cross the course on their way to club tents. They plunge into the hearty crush.

"Oh, ain't she lovely! Look at this one com-

ing in the grey dress. Oh my, she forgot to put on a petticoat! If the Queen sees that she'll be turned away!"

This causes a sensation! The speaker is asked to explain.

"They're awful strict!" she says. "Once Queen Victoria—or was it Queen Alexandra?—saw a lady as she could see through and she called her up to the royal box and gave her a real old dressing down . . . told her off proper, she did. Said, 'We are not amused.' That's how they talk, you know—We! And the lady left in disgrace!"

A large woman standing next to me whispers, "They've got it all wrong, but I never argue with people!"

I look at her, and think how lucky it is for people that she never argues. She is like three *prima donnas* in one. There are no sleeves to her enormous knitted jumper, and her arms, like the legs of a giant which have been vaccinated by a mad doctor, terminate in hands which hold a small, ridiculous paper fan.

"Lovely sight, ain't it? Some folks say it ought to be done away with, but—I never argue. You must have a head to everything, mustn't you? That's nature. I like a head that's worth looking at—ow, here they come!"

With a soft whirr of wheels going over turf and a faint sound of bits jingling the King and Queen drive up . . . scarlet and gold. . . . grooms in Ascot livery . . . more carriages, and the Standard falling from the mast over the royal box.

So Ascot begins.

In the royal enclosure opposite the foam of soft dresses surges and breaks round the curving steps, pretty women put up parasols of pink and green and red. On the Heath side of the course the man with the lemons cries:

"Who wants a cooler. . . . Come on, now, a cooler?"

And over the green heath the great crowd moves and alters and eats and drinks and speaks its mind with more force than elegance; every part of it amusing, every bit worth looking at—a royal enclosure of humanity.

VII

ON A hot June day, when London is airless and bad-tempered, there are two ways of spending a day on the river. This is one of them.

The long, low, touring car leaves London, runs over twenty-four miles of road and purrs

into Maidenhead, that pretty, sophisticated place on the Thames. Loungers in the bar at Skindle's observe, as it pulls up, an admirable peach-colored limb in the act of descending. Then its companion; the famous legs of Poppy Sweet, of the Stupidity Theatre. There is no *matinée* to-day.

He barks sharply, and the servantry jump to obey him. A corner table for two with a view of the river! Poppy enters the dining room with an air which makes you feel the absence of music to be a grave error. One or two people recognize her, and she bestows her face-cream smile on them. He follows behind like a lamb. Two waiters bow and the wine waiter lurks in the background. Poppy clasps her over-manicured hands, and, resting the tip of her delicious chin on them, gazes intently at him from the shade of her knowing little hat. Yes, canteloupe melon, salmon, chicken, iced asparagus, and a *pêche Melba*, and—"Do let's have some bubbly!" Instead of rapping Poppy over the knuckles and telling her that only . . . however, he orders a bottle of Pol Roger and looks out over the river. (It really is a lovely day!)

The meadows are freckled with kingcups; meek cows stand in lush grass; a big, white swan

moves slowly out of the reeds by the river bank. But he sees nothing of this. He is not allowed to.

"And would you think these pearls are real, Jim?"

"Yes, of course I would," he lies.

"Well, that's funny—they are! How did you guess? Berty gave them to me. Shall I marry Berty? No; do tell me. How would you like me as Lady Spindleberry? He's proposed three times, but he's such an awful idiot, and I cannot trust him out of my sight. . . . Isn't this melon yummy? You know, you're rather a dear. . . . Shall I tell you what Gracey said the other night? No, I won't! Yes, I will. . . ."

(She wriggles in her seat and leans across with her pretty chin among the roses. . . .)

He begins to wish he had not brought Poppy. Her conversation is like a dripping tap. She has a horrid habit of talking about people he has never met, of frightening him horribly by confiding in him. (Apparently every fellow in his club has proposed to her!) He looks at her over the rim of his glass, admires the curve of her neck and the injudicious brilliance of her eyes, at the same time thinking that she is rather

like a Red Indian waving scalps. He puts his hand instinctively to his head and smoothes his hair. Why didn't he run down alone and lie in a punt with his pipe and a tin of tobacco? Would it be possible to get her away in a boat and make her interested in butterflies or cows or water lilies? How surprising that at least six men in the room are envying him. . . .

"And then I said to Arthur, 'Arthur,' I said, 'you think you're pretty smart and all that, but if you think I was born yesterday, my lad, you're very much mistaken.' Then Milly chipped in. You know that way she has of talking as if she was chewing tin tacks? Well, she screwed up that ugly little mouth of hers and said . . ."

So it goes on till the long touring car takes the road to London, its exhaust opening occasionally like a deep oath. That is one way of spending a day on the river. This is the other.

. . . . .

He comes down to the boathouse in the delicious, rather secret little village of Bray, carrying a basket. She also carries a basket. They both look so happy that the red-faced old punt merchant smiles and becomes almost sentimental. He gives them his best new punt.

"Now, my lass, remember we're broke, and if you squash those strawberries we can't afford any more. . . ."

She stops horrified, and her thin, pleated skirt, swaying, pays a compliment to her grace. She looks at him, puts the basket in the punt, points an accusing finger:

"You extravagant thing, Bill! Strawberries!"

They find their way to a backwater, a delicious green shade where the trailing willows lock them in; the water laps against the punt; it is such fun opening the paper bags, the Thermos flask, the squashy sandwiches in greased paper. A cool wind flutters the leaves. It is tremendously good to be alive. They paddle out of the green pavilion. He lets her take the punt pole, just for the joy of watching her swaying above him; his lazy mind fastens on the delicious way her gold bangle slides on her bare arm as she brings up the pole, on the beauty of her hands as she straightens her hair. He thinks she is the most marvellous thing that ever happened, and he would like the punt to sink so that he could save her life.

"May, tell me—are you glad we're going to be married?"

"Oh, Bill . . . oh, stop! That man saw us!"

They go back in the dusk with the white moths fluttering and the swifts cutting the warm air like black darts. There is a glow in the sky, the herald of a honey-coloured moon.

"And you think that Jacobean for the dining room, dearest?"

"Yes!"

"And blue paper and saffron cushions?"

"And you listening to the sound of my key in the lock, and me coming in with a pearl necklace to tell you that since I took the correspondence course in accountancy I've been made general manager."

"Silly!"

"Not a bit! Why, when we're married I'll work like . . . Oh, here we are! Isn't it awful the way time flies. . . . Hold on, there's a little silver moth in your hair. . . ."

Dick Turpin, of the boathouse, smoking his pipe, looks at the clock, looks at them, opens his mouth to say something nasty, and then—how strange!—decides not to remember that they are late and consequently owe him at least five bob!

Such is the power of love—or is it just June magic?

VIII

A MAN in a bottle-green coat lifts a coach horn to his lips in Olympia and sounds a silver sweet tan-ta-ra.

Into the arena comes a neat, young Italian officer in waisted smoke-grey tunic and shining patent leathers, riding a big-boned bay horse. Through the audience passes that flutter of excitement like wind going through leaves, that delicious thrill that comes only once a year with the International Horse Show.

It is a flutter composed of girls saying, "How smart the Italians are! I love their dear little caps, or are they shakos?" and another kind of girl saying, "That's a good-lookin' horse, that is; a real lepper, as we say in Ireland," and a deeper mutter from men trying to judge the new competitor's chances of jumping that stiff course of gates, hedges and walls dotted round the tan.

The Italian collects his horse, and his horse knows that he is being collected. He seems to realize that it is up to him to fly over those jumps with a clean pair of heels, as he had so often done at home at Tor di Quinto. He is "up against" the cavalry of England, Sweden,

France, Belgium, and Poland; and the Duke of Connaught in the royal box has his eye on him!

Off he goes, a magnificent, anxious thing, breathing deeply, the man on his back nursing him to the first box jump. Up! Done it! Then the next! He takes a bar jump like a flying bird. The scarlet-coated grooms standing round the jumps wink at each other. This fellow is going to stay the course! The bay horse faces a stone wall. He doesn't like it. He shakes his head and his eyes distend. He does not trust these English walls! However, he gallops up and seems rather surprised to find himself on the other side! The audience muffle a rustle of applause. A five-barred gate is in his path, a beastly gate, the kind of gate that keeps people from being killed by trains. He rushes it. He jumps it, but, in jumping, his rear nearside hoof kicks down a tiny little white bar of wood, hardly bigger than a child's brick.

How demoralizing! He shakes his head and goes off to his last fence. His man lets him out! He releases some reserve spirit or fire that he has been saving up, and the big bay thunders up to the last gate, takes off, clears it, and canters out of the arena, where two excited Italian Army grooms wait to lead him to stables. . . .

Once more the bottle-green hornblower sounds a note. Other riders canter in and go over the jumps with skill and good fortune, or else they hear behind them the humiliating crash of falling gates.

I have seen the Grand National Steeplechase three times, but I have not been as thrilled at Aintree as I am at Olympia when they jump for the King's Gold Cup. Here are all the thrills of a big steeplechase compressed, as it were, for a London afternoon. You could sit for ever watching the varied riders, aching for their victory, condemning their faults with the easy air of a spectator, admiring so often the sympathy between man and beast, and liking the fellow who goes off patting his horse, especially when the horse has let him down badly.

Then, of course, there is Lord Lonsdale. The sight of him in the most waistful frock coat of the year, a cigar like a young coach horn in his mouth, moving with a debonair air between pink geraniums with a trayful of rosettes, is a sign that the London season has reached its crest.

There are neat young women in riding habits showing themselves off and their horses, and young men from all the counties of England who ride round Olympia with a something about

them that makes you see the ghost of a pack behind them and a pale sun rising over a hill early on some fresh, cub-hunting morning.

Afterwards you go through the stables.

Long heads are pushed over horse boxes in your direction. Long ears are raised at you. Now and then a velvet muzzle desires to be rubbed. Now and then a testy visitor who does not agree with Olympia, and such-like showing-off, lashes out in that which he takes to be your vicinity; but, mostly, it is an affair of soft whinnies and nose rubbing.

"Pazienza!" says the big-boned bay Italian to the little chestnut Belgian. "I wasn't myself to-day. Music always gives me the creeps. You wait till next time. I'll show you!"

"And did you ever see anything so lovely as we are?" say the little harness ponies that go high-stepping round the tan, each one like a reflection of the other, perfect in movement, in size, in colour, in gloss. . . .

But what I like best—as I have said before—is to hear a man whose horse failed him whisper, "Never mind, old girl; you did your damnedest, but—you can do better at home! Only you and I know that!"

The answering nose rub seems to offer him

the usual regrets, and somewhere in those deep eyes is a promise to "pull it off" next time.

IX

THE King sits in a chair at Hendon when the Royal Air Force holds its noisy pageant and he speaks a few words into a box. "Hello, Mosquitoes?" he says, as though he were speaking over a telephone. "Hello, Mosquitoes? Alter course sixteen points outwards!" Then he looks up into the air, and a hundred thousand people look up also. . . .

They see, black against a windy sky, a fighting squadron of nine swift aëroplanes. The drone of their engines is steady and monotonous as a dentist's drill. They boom and throb through the air, four to the left, four to the right, and the squadron leader behind. As soon as the King speaks, the sound of his voice is heard away up there in the sky. The watchers below see the formation alter. They hear an intensified roar of engines as the squadron leader shoots ahead of his eight 'planes; they see the eight fighters wheel; they see the leader turn with a half roll; and the squadron, in the

same formation as before, is flying in the reverse direction.

"Wonderful!" say the hundred thousand.

It is! It is uncanny. In the middle of a great crowd a loud speaker magnifies the King's voice. It magnifies also the roar of the flying machines so that you hear the order much as the squadron leader high in the air hears it, coming up from the green earth through the thunder of the engines—the voice of the King.

I stand there among the thousands of people who make Hendon Aërodrome look like a race-course, and I feel that we are, perhaps unconsciously, witnessing an historic sight. I remember those Kings of England who have stood on hills and sent orders to their bowmen and their horsemen; I think how thrilled we should be could we put back the clock and hear Edward III order the advance of Crécy, how romantic it would be to have heard Henry V harangue his troops before he flung them into the Battle of Agincourt . . . and at the Air Force Pageant we hear the King of England speak to nine black hawks in the sky; and the hawks wheel to his bidding.

Girls stand on chairs; young men (who were in the Air Force before it was "royal") explain

to them those technicalities which women pretend to hear; soldiers, sailors, members of Parliament, and the air attachés of foreign Powers gaze upward through the afternoon at the surprising pageant of British air power unfolded against a petulant English sky.

I watch four squadrons drill as perfectly as the Guards drill on parade, keeping a straight line, wing tip to wing tip, booming through the heavens like a flight of wild duck, slowly altering the pattern of their progress, wheeling, changing formation, exact, and sinister with death-dealing power. Once as they come out of the distance, black dots that grow in size each second, black dots that hum like a nest of hornets, that throb nearer till the throb becomes a roar, I remember the Gothas.

"I heard an Army lecture the other day," says a young soldier who is standing next to me, "and the lecturer proved that another war is impossible for another fifty years because the economic stability of nations is wrecked."

"Yes?"

"I think he was talking through his hat somewhat, don't you? I think the next war will be over in a day and will cost, roughly, fourpence."

He inserts a monocle in his eye and directs a

pink face to the heavens, and I think, "Out of the mouths of babes . . ."

"Isn't it all perfectly thrilling?" says his girl.

Then a heavy bomber takes the air, a great cumbersome black thing which can carry five men with it to sow death. It zooms round in a circle till it meets two trim little swift fighting 'planes that set about it like two sparrows chivying a thrush. The three-cornered battle for position goes on. One of the fighting 'planes faces the enemy and there comes a rattle of machine guns like a stick drawn over railings.

The bomber does an astonishing thing. It dips and loops. This great battleship of the air behaves like a flippant monoplane. It seems trying to shake off its pursuers with stunts which no old-time bomber would dare to have attempted.

"They used to talk about the silent Navy," says my blond friend, "but I think the R.A.F.'s been doing a bit of quiet work since the war. Did you ever see such flying?"

I go away with two visions: one of the air full of machines and cities huddling in terror, one of the King of England speaking to his flying squadron quietly, as a man might speak to a friend over a telephone. . . .

X

A MAN is washing down the steps of the little restaurant under the trees of Kensington Gardens, which is the most delicious spot for breakfast on a warm June morning. The cat which has been locked up all night is prowling over the grass like a pirate king. Birds are singing in the trees; the early sun is casting wrong-way-round shadows on the grass; to the left there is a glassy grayness, the waters of the Serpentine, while to the right an occasional horseman jingles to the Row.

You are the only person down for breakfast in Kensington Gardens, and, having arrived before the waiters, you feel a kind of virtuous indignation. There are dreadfully dissipated-looking crumbs on the green metal table left over from some one's outdoor dinner of the night before. They look ghastly in the pure morning light, suggesting mutton, or roast beef and sticky potatoes. You hold off the cat while you give them to a sparrow. Then you hear a motor car approaching, and soon there comes across the grass a man and a girl.

"Can we have breakfast?" he asks the step-washer.

"At about nine," is the reply.

"You don't mind waiting, dearest?"

"No, not a bit!"

Quickly she catches his hand and gives it a squeeze, and they come and sit down on small green chairs near you in the wide-flung shade of an enormous beech tree.

. . . . .

Then you remember with a kind of shock that when you are in love you get up at seven, or even six o'clock in the morning to snatch an hour together before the day begins. No doubt it is still happening all over London. Delicious joy rides to nowhere, glorious morning walks anywhere and always at the meeting, "Do you love me?" as if a sudden emotional landslip might have occurred since the last assurance at eleven o'clock the previous night. Surely a test of love is the genuine belief that the other person is suffering from spiritual astigmatism. What she can see in you is, to you, inconceivable. That she does see things must be audibly obvious to you every ten minutes, much as a person in danger of falling asleep in church pinches himself to keep conscious.

"Do you love me?"

"You know I do."

"Yes, but *say* it."

(Whisper, whisper, whisper.)

There they sit in the shade of an enormous beech tree—making the world go round.

"Ham?" says the waiter to them.

"Yes, ham," they reply, "and eggs."

"And coffee," says the girl, stifling a small yawn. "Strong."

"Coffee hasn't come yet," says the waiter.

"Then tea."

The man walks off to his two-seater to bring her a cushion, and she takes the chance to bring out a small mirror and find out how awful she looks. She is deeply in love. She is about twenty-eight, and consequently realizes that early morning is not her best time of day. He comes back with the cushion and a little book. He begins to read to her, solemnly and intently, and she, paying no attention to the wonderful words he is using, cups her chin in her hands and watches his face, noting the incredibly beautiful way his mouth moves and—probably even admiring his moustache.

"Isn't that wonderful?" he says, putting down the book.

"Yes, do take your hat off."

He begins to read again, and she bends over and takes off his hat, putting it gently under

the table. You catch a word here and there. He is reading Stevenson's "Romance."

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird song at morning and star shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea. . . .

"Ham?" remarks the waiter.

"Isn't it wonderful?" says the man.

The waiter thinks for a moment that the pink and white portions of ham are praised and appears gratified, but, being used to lovers, he quickly smothers his smile and goes away. Then those two abandon themselves to the joy of eating together. He likes watching her fingers drop sugar in his tea, passing salt to him, and you sit there thinking what a shame that life should ever be any different for them. If we could always be as crazily happy the world would not go round: it would explode.

They crack their eggs and catch themselves looking up at one another in a kind of religious enthusiasm. Then they smile, such a smile. . . . You wonder if he will ever shout out at breakfast, "Good heavens, I'm late again, why on earth can't you . . ." and aim a hasty kiss at her, miss and collide with her right ear and

dash out into the world like a human volcano. . . .

His hand lies on the table; she places hers over it, and they look out across the shadow-barred grass powdered with white daisies, through the trees where the smooth waters of the Serpentine lie like a silver lake. So they sit in a spell till he looks at his watch. The world is calling him! This must end! They rise up and walk very close together over the dappled morning grass.

. . . . . .

As you go through the Park the children are coming out with their nursemaids, and you think that no matter how many people in London began the day badly, two at least had started well under the wide-flung shade of an enormous beech tree which has probably grown old to whispers. . . .

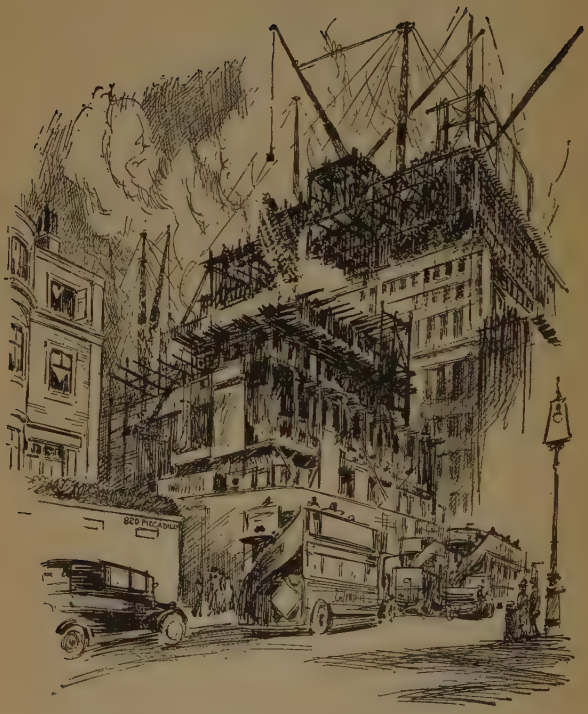
"Do you love me?"

"You *know* I do."

"Well, *say* it!"

It must have heard a deal of saying.

JULY: *You laze at Henley—you watch the 'Varsity Match—also the Eton and Harrow Match—you attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace.*



CHANGING PICCADILLY

JULY

I

THERE is, strictly speaking, no need to write much about Henley Regatta, that garden party in a punt. It can be put in one phrase: "Her eyes are blue." . . .

She wears the cream coat with the white fur collar which she bought on the Croisette last February, and, as I say, her eyes are blue: not a musical-comedy heroine blue—a Spartan blue with a touch of steel in it. As we sit in canvas chairs, shaved lawns to the back and an old wall and the Thames to the front, I have occasion to know that her shoes are a triumphant climax to a fine sweep of the only right shade of sand silk: slim sandals with a thin strip of white leather running from toe to instep. Her eyes are blue. Repeat the last sentence five hundred times and you have the heart of Henley: blue eyes and cold chicken, sand stockings and strawberries. . . .

Round us on green lawns are Old Blues. These rowing veterans are the same men who

burst into print once a year when they report the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. Some are so old that they have turned white. They wear caps of eggshell blue and navy blue and cherry pink, and they look as Rip Van Winkle might have looked when he awakened if his sleep had come on him during his schooldays. They seem vaguely excited and they often gaze upstream. They are rather a nuisance; they convey the strange impression that this is a regatta.

Every year when Henley comes round in its due time it seems that some frolicking giant empties into the Thames a box of confetti, which, clinging together, lodges in a straight line in the very centre of the olive-green river. You look at this floating confetti, and see that it is composed of hundreds of punts wedged like a crowd in the Mall. In the punts are men in savage blazers which proclaim in hoarse, scarlet accents the hall-mark of their wearers in polite society. There are also girls. In the air balloons filled with gas bob and rise in bunches on the end of long strings.

"Like their dear little souls bobbing about," says the girl with the blue eyes.

I try to cheer her up; but she is too young to be simple-minded. I point out the striped

pavilions on the other bank. More Old Blues! Some of the oldest in the world. Faint across the water comes the sound of a band. Hospital students in a punt with a piano are singing in a good cause and collecting money in a net at the end of a long bamboo pole. The sun comes out

of a hot, steamy sky and lights up the confetti so that it shines.

"Like Nice dumped in the Thames," says the girl with the blue eyes as she prods moss with the point of her parasol.

Everybody says how English Henley is. It is, of course, quite un-English. It is like a sheik in the Strand. Even the poplars rise up

out of the green beaches by the river as if mildly outraged by this colourful intrusion. The quiet green countryside ending in a vista of sage green trees beside a silver stream is hushed in astonishment. Englishmen, who generally go about the world in black, come out in scarlet stripes, in blue and yellow, in green and mauve.

Somebody's father leans out of a punt and coyly bursts a balloon.

How shamefully Latin!

How lazy, how peaceful. . . .

Blue eyes and a faint hint of amber in the air and a slow, indolent voice: "Cynthia says she is going to marry Frank no matter what Mother says."

"Really?"

"Of course they'll be happy. Not a bean in all the world. That means they'll have to work, and work means happiness."

"Fancy that! Really! What *is* work? . . ."

The line of confetti lounges somnolently. On the fringes a girl with pink arms paddles a punt into position. Three balloons break loose and sail up in the air. A nigger minstrel in a silk hat twangs a banjo, and from his round mouth comes information about his home town and watermelons. Some one gives him sixpence.

A thousand women open wickerwork baskets and say they've forgotten the salt and that the butter's mixed up with the mustard.

Hello!

The line of confetti moves. It wriggles and rises. A gun booms. The Old Blues bring out field glasses. . . . "And when Uncle Jim died they found out that for years—practically years—he'd been married, well practically married, to his cook and . . ."

Far down the silvery stream there is cheering. Girls in the line of confetti are waving tiny coloured handkerchiefs. Two sweating eights come into sight, their oars sweeping back and forth in unison, the cox red in the face yelling at them, the hindmost eight bursting their muscles to win a yard. . . .

"Well rowed!"

"Well rowed!"

"*Jolly* well rowed!"

"Yes, what were you saying? Uncle Jim? Confound these interruptions! Would you like some salmon? And strawberries? And cream? Then come. . . ."

Blue eyes; and a faint hint of amber in the air.

That, more or less, is Henley.

II

IF Uncle Athelstan leaves you money it must be good to be a country parson. Slaying greenfly on the Maréchal Niels should blend so well with the uprootment of sin from simple lives; and how sweet it must be fussily to cross the sloping lawn on a July evening to write your sermon with a brown gardener's hand in the summer arbor under the old yew tree. . . .

Sweetest of all must be July and Lord's Cricket ground during the annual match between Oxford and Cambridge. The 'Varsity Match pulls the parson back into life. In thousands of vicarages comes some memory of old times. The picture of fifteen young men and a Rugger ball over the study mantelpiece (next to the big photograph of the Coliseum) must become a target for many a wistful glance. Somewhere in that group is the vicar, hefty and keen, as he was before life smoothed him and rounded him and gave him that well-bred resignation and that air of hope in a world to come.

Yes; he played a straight bat in those days; he stroked an eight at Henley; he did everything well, and he was looked on as a good

sportsman. . . . Lord's! He'll meet the men of his year at Lord's: Old Brown, who is a bishop; old Sir Arthur Crutch, the soldier; Jimmie Mont, the scientist; and Oswald Blake, who is still delightfully nothing. Then the vicar packs his bag, casts a doubtful glance at his silk hat ("No, of course, you mustn't buy a new one, dear; such extravagance!"), and the dogcart takes him to the station . . . to London . . . to the old memories and the men he played with once.

So when you sit among the crowd at Lord's during the 'Varsity Match you will, no matter how good the cricket is, find your eyes straying towards the vicars and the deans and the bishops. It is their day of days. How good it is to sit at Lord's in bursts of sun with your hat brim down, your eyes in a line of shadow, your chin warm with sun, the sun on your hands, and Cambridge fielding and Oxford making runs, playing the only game that could still be played in a high hat. All round you friends are meeting.

When Oxford went out at one o'clock seven men harnessed themselves to a giant roller and walked up and down the pitch, crushing the sweet-smelling turf. The crowd surged out from free seats and cheap seats and not-so-

cheap seats till the green ground looked like the garden party at a Church conference. Difficult to believe that all these grave men of God were undergraduates thirty years ago!

Some have stolen away alone to flavor the past by themselves, to hear the sharp, delicious crack of leather on willow; others had brought daughters with "vicarage" written all over their sweet faces. And some come in gaiters and some come in rusty old brown-black suits and hats that seem to shout sadly that the organ fund still stands at £4 *2s. 3d.*, and that the vestry still leaks like—anything!

"You remember me?"

A little country parson is speaking, a healthy little rose-grower, if ever there was one: dog hairs on his broadcloth! The bishop looks down from his stringed silk hat, down over his undulating apron to the little beaming man, and he adjusts his pince-nez.

"Brown? Brown? Of course."

The bishop comes off his throne. His white hand grasps the brown country hand, and the country parson sparkles with pleasure to find himself remembered. He tells the bishop how he enjoyed his book on the Early Christian martyrs (but he does not mention that he had to borrow it), and the bishop remembers the

debates in those old days, the arguments "about it and about," the ideals and the things they meant to do in life, the violent splitting of hairs . . . and surely this was the man who once emptied a water jug over him! Ahem!

"Dine with me to-night," says the bishop.

"I would like to do so," stutters the parson, "but I have already—er—promised . . ."

"Well, some other time."

And the little parson goes off knowing that he has promised nothing, that he will dine alone in a temperance hotel . . . with dog hairs on the elbow of his brown-black coat, for that is the only coat he has!

III

WHEN you go to Lord's to see Eton beat Harrow, or Harrow Eton, you are certain to find yourself sitting next to a large man in the late 'forties, a handsome, yellow-haired Norseman. He sits with his silk hat pushed back from his forehead and his cornflower-blue eyes fixed on the field. Now and then his huge, pink, freckled hands holding the match card twitch excitedly, and, never taking his eyes from Eton and Harrow, he shouts at the top of his voice:

"Oh, a beauty . . . a good shot! Played, sir! That's the style! Oh, a good shot!"

Beside him sits his son, a smaller version of himself, hiding that broad forehead under a big topper, the same jaw line, the same fair skin, but somber dark eyes. You can tell that the absent wife is dark and southern—just the kind a tawny man marries, given a fair run—and the lad is quiet and reserved, so that when the people in front turn to see who is making such a dreadful noise he looks away slightly pained. The front-benchers, turning, meet the cornflower eyes and the slightly-parted lips of the father, and they have to smile with happiness.

"My dear," says a woman, "do look behind—not now, in a minute—isn't he a darling? Did you ever see such enthusiasm or such deep blue eyes?"

Just then Harrow hits a boundary. Twenty or thirty people turn to listen:

"Pretty, pretty—oh, a pretty stroke. . . ."

The son sits sunk in gloom, gazing up swiftly at his father's youthful blue eyes with dark, middle-aged regret. . . .

"Forty years on growing younger and younger . . ." you sing under your breath.

Round you curve the stands, packed with the

best-looking crowd of the London year. You can rave about Ascot, but let me rave about Lord's at the Eton and Harrow match: the tiers of ninon and *crêpe de Chine*, the marvelous revelation of other fellows' sisters (that marvel of life: how does spotty-faced Brown Major manage to have a sister like Helen of Troy?), the coaches with pairs of admirable yellow and peach legs dangling over the top deck, now and then a human tadpole who hasn't grown tails blushfully arming his sisters round, a mother watching her boy step briskly down the pavilion steps with his bat beneath his arm—a wonderful day, a fit climax to the London season.

"No, my lad, don't you take 'em!" shouts Cornflower Eyes to the distant batsman. "You let 'em go past you, old feller. . . . Did you see that leg break, Johnny?"

"Yes, dad," says the son coldly.

A few minutes before the luncheon bell the score touches a hundred, and the man who has turned the Harrow song inside out takes off his gleaming hat and waves it in the air. He grows younger and younger! He now seems like anybody's fag! I look at that firm, pink face and see him exactly as he was at fifteen!

Luncheon! The line of colour round Lord's

breaks and moves forward as thousands swarm over the field.

You meet a man and his wife from Chicago. They have never seen a cricket match. They have just arrived. They gaze at the silk hats on the green and:

"My!" they say, "where's this cricket game? And what are those youngsters dressed up in high hats for?"

You explain it all to them.

"The ninety-sixth annual match?" they cry. "You don't say!"

You try to tell them that it is much more than a cricket match, that it is annual proof of a tradition, that England's battles . . . that . . . that . . . how difficult it is to explain these things without blowing a trumpet.

"We thought we'd maybe hear some shouting here this afternoon," says the husband doubtfully.

Your eye catches the plump figure of a bishop walking with one of the best-looking members of the Cabinet!

"Don't reckon on that!" you put in quickly. "We take things very quietly. This is only a kind of proof that sons are almost as good as their fathers, that sisters are still as pretty,

that mothers are still as lovely, and that Eton can still shout at Harrow."

Among the gently moving, variegated crowd you catch sight of your friend with the cornflower eyes. The father is meeting old Harrovians; pinker and pinker he grows; you can hear his laugh puncturing the babel. The son stands by in well-bred composure, thinking that the guv'nor is letting himself go a bit too much, just a little bit too happy is the old man. . . .

Ah, you think to yourself, some day that boy will stand on that field, with youth lying like a dream behind him, and then he will remember how his father's eyes lit up, and then perhaps he will understand. . . .

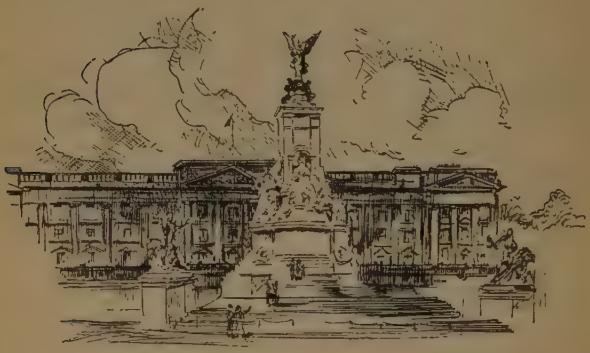
IV

A CROWD lingers round the Victoria Memorial in the Mall to watch you go through the gates of Buckingham Palace to the King's Garden Party. A royal garden party is exactly like any other garden party except that the crowd is, perhaps, more self-conscious.

Your car runs through the central archway of the Palace and falls into line in a queue.

Car after car discharges its occupants under a glass portico.

An official in scarlet and gold takes your invitation card, and you join a crowd of people all walking one way down the long corridors, through a large, heavily-pictured and deep-carpeted room that leads out to a wide terrace. The back of Buckingham Palace is surprisingly



beautiful. Lovely lawns, streaked with the light green lines of recent mowing, slope to a lake fringed with reeds. In the center of the lawn is a scarlet canopy upheld by bamboo poles covered with chased silver work. This is the famous Durbar Pavilion. It leads to the royal marquee, in which fruit is seen lying like Academy still-life groups in gold plates and

cups. To the right is a larger marquee, in which, later on, you will fight to feed a woman.

You are conscious, as you walk over the lawns, of the roar of an invisible London. You can hear the omnibuses rushing by towards Victoria, but the gardens look, as indeed they are, a part of the parks, and if the top stories of certain tall buildings near Victoria did not stand up above the trees you would think yourself in the grounds of a large country house miles away in a green shire.

It is impossible to go to a Palace garden party without meeting some one you know. It is a pretty wide net cast out in London. The lawns are occupied by thousands of men in silk hats or grey Ascot hats, and thousands of women and girls in rainbow beauty. They keep on walking, so that the color pattern against the green grass is always changing. Now and then the conventional crowd seems to stand aside to permit one of the King's more unusual guests to reveal himself; a native ruler in yellow silk jacket, a Malayan noble in apple-green trousers and a hat like a strawberry basket on his oiled head, or merely a Socialist member of Parliament living up to his principles in a Stetson.

You come face to face with a famous states-

man, a poet, a soldier, a much-photographed beauty, an actress with a cachet from the last generation, a Dominions High Commissioner. Members of both Houses of Parliament are as frequent as blackberries in September. . . .

Ah, something is happening! A clock strikes four! A Household Cavalry band plays the National Anthem. Thousands of silk and grey toppers are raised. The King and the Queen walk out to meet their guests. Behind them are members of the Royal Family. There is polite rubbernecking. People edge up and pretend not to be vulgarly curious:

"My!" says an American débutante, "isn't the Queen good-looking?"

The Queen is one of the most regal women in the world, and she never looks more gracious than in her own garden greeting the hundreds of people whom it is the duty of royalty to greet with the right word of welcome. Little groups form round the King and other groups form round the Queen. In the center of these the King and Queen hold an informal Court. If you hang on the edge you realize how trying kingship must be. You think how you would hate to have to shake hands with hundreds of people and provide the right words for each and—look as if you loved it.

You hear the King's laugh. You see a blushing girl sink in a curtsey. The King's voice goes on round the group, and you are surprised that he should remember so many of the people. "Is your son better?" you hear him ask some one.

The royal party retires to its marquee.

"I'd adore an ice," says some one's sister.

You plunge into the refreshment tent. You butt into the backs of morning coats. You politely insinuate yourself towards a strawberry ice, which a gallant admiral carries off just as your fingers are outstretched. You find another and bear it away.

"You know lots about London; tell me about Buckingham Palace. . . ."

"Well, it's modern, of course. In Charles II's time it was known as Mulberry Garden because James I in his attempt to encourage the English silk industry had it planted with mulberries. The Earl of Arlington had a house on this site in 1674 and he imported the first pound of tea to enter the country. It cost him sixty shillings, so probably the first cup of tea was made here."

"How thrilling! But when did it become a royal palace?"

"The Duke of Buckingham bought Ar-

lington House and built Buckingham House, and George III bought Buckingham House. George IV had the building remodeled, but neither he nor his successor occupied it. It is only since the accession of Queen Victoria that it has become the regular London residence of the sovereign. . . ."

After tea you fight down a craving for tobacco; for you must not smoke in the gardens of Buckingham Palace! You decide to go away and smoke outside. You walk through a shrubbery. You surprise a lonely man sitting under a tree, his silk hat beside him on the seat. He looks up like a guilty schoolboy. A thin wreath of tobacco rises from behind him! He realizes that you know his awful secret, and there is an appealing look in his eyes—are you a good sportsman or the Lord Chamberlain?

You smile. His better nature asserts itself. He knocks out a pipe—a pipe!—and rising, a better and a nobler man, goes back with an innocent face to the party as if he had not sinned at all!

AUGUST: *You see the sights of London—you climb to the Dome of St. Paul's—you see the Crown Jewels—you watch the changing of the Guard at St. James's—you inspect the King's horses.*

THE GATEWAY TO ST. JAMES'S PALACE

AUGUST

I

THE time has now come when some reckless pen will repeat the annual falsehood: "London is empty" (which only means that the Dowager Lady Slimmer has gone to Perthshire).

London empty!

It was empty once only in history, after the Eagles had been called home to Rome to assist in the obsequies of an empire, and then, it is true, night fell upon London as it fell upon the world, so that when the Saxons came, cupping their hands on Ludgate Hill, and shouting to the weed-grown ruin of the Roman wall, "Hallo, there! Anyone at home?" an echo only answered them; and they went in, and London was born again. . . .

London empty!

Goodwood Races are over, and the sleeping cars from King's Cross, Euston and St. Pancras will soon be taking the men with the guns and the fishing-rods, and the girls with the shooting sticks and the golf clubs, away to Scotland,

to awaken them in a country of stone walls and amber-colored streams under grey stone bridges. The hair of the railway porters in that land shines like fire in a bush, and the clouds are white caps on the heads of the hills. There is wind and heather.

Meanwhile London is full. These lucky migrants are a mere spoonful from the ocean of London life. A larger spoonful trickles to the coast, and still there are millions who never leave London, and hundreds of thousands who will pour in during August from the rest of the world. There are just now countless young American women in brown tweed costumes, and heads in guide books. They are not dollar princesses. This is most likely their first trip to Yurrup. They are keen and interesting, and very thrilled by London. You may meet them in the square before the grey Guildhall with the pigeons nodding round their low-heeled shoes.

"My!" they say. "Fancy living and working with all this around!" and they look up to our grey spires and towers with eyes in which there is reverence.

The Londoner cannot understand them. He cannot realize what it is to live without history, in a recent city where any middle-aged man can

remember the square before they built the Court-house, can remember them laying out the main street and the coming of the railway. The tourist from a new country cannot, in his turn, understand the Londoner's casual view of his city, that "it-always-has-been-here-and-always-will-be-here" air, that familiarity which breeds carelessness. To their fresh eyes London is like a history book come to life. So every day is a sightseeing day in August and the St. Paul's climbing season is in full swing.

Every morning at breakfast visitors to London open their guide books and read that only 616 steps lead to the ball which supports the great cross above the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Only 616! Pooh, that's nothing—pass the marmalade!

I step out on the Stone Gallery, feeling rather blown, to discover about twenty people taking silent stock of London. Half of them are Americans. There are several of those lissom college girls with faces like magazine covers who add so greatly to the beauty of Autumn; there are business-like fathers absorbing the scene through horn-rimmed glasses, and mothers, also in horn-rims. There are two Indian students gazing down into Cheapside;

there is a Scotsman looking over the hideous roof of Cannon Street Station towards London Bridge, and there is a friendly, talkative Yorkshireman with a camera, who is making a roof record of the world's great cities; he already possesses the roof lines of New York, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Vienna, Liverpool and Manchester.

"This," says the guide, picking off gritty masses of congealed soot and filth from a piece of Portland stone, "is what makes London so healthy."

He is perfectly serious, and—as we are all strangers—we do not dare to contradict him!

I think that I would like to climb into the ball below the cross. I leave the international gathering and plunge into the lonely gloom of a twisting staircase that runs inside the dome. Up, up I go, marveling at Wren's achievement. I step out on the Golden Gallery; and—this is the place to look at London!

It is a sunny, warm afternoon with just enough wind to blow away the smoke and reveal the boundaries. I see Harrow Church among green hills, the Crystal Palace on its high ridge. I see the Thames winding up to Kew and, growing broader, flowing out to hills and the sea. Millions of homes with the silver strip of river

between, spires of parish churches which stood beside village greens before London crept up and engulfed them: a great stone octopus growing, ever growing, pushing out a tentacle here and another there.

Down below, the tiny people swarm; the tiny omnibuses, small enough to pass through a needle's eye, thread the narrow ways, and there is just the faintest feeling of life, of the power of those thousand wheels, in the iron balustrading.

I climb up higher still towards the cross of St. Paul's.

Now the staircases become openwork and difficult. There are three, the last one ending in a narrow place just big enough to take the body. There is a little window covered by wire netting. I cling to the staircase and look out—a perfectly terrifying view of London, as if one were looking out of a stationary airship. When I look up it seems that the great cross of Paul's is leaning against the sky.

Then I remember the strange story, quoted by Thornbury from "The Cyclopædia of Medicine," of the man who met a wizard in this very spot. This young man, who obviously went mad, said that he was taken up into the ball of St. Paul's by a stranger whom he had met in the

churchyard. When they were there a strange fear and trembling assailed him as his friend took out a queer instrument like a compass with a mirror in the center, which he addressed in a strange language. He then asked the young man if there was anyone in London whom he would like to see. He asked to see his father. Immediately a picture of his father appeared in the mirror. The young man was so frightened that he said he must descend. At the door of St. Paul's the mysterious stranger whispered in his ear, "Don't forget that you are the Slave of the Man with the Mirror!"

This experience preyed so continuously on the young man's mind that he declared to a doctor who saw him that the wizard of St. Paul's was always calling him and that his life had become a thing of horror. What a spot for a magician! What a scene for a drama with a great city lying below like a map: the ideal vantage ground from which an Asmodeus might pry into the secrets of eight million lives!

I climb down into the Golden Gallery and down to the Stone Gallery. Here the visitors have altered. A new group lean over the stonework trying to take in the enormous network of London. Their guide is trying to trace the Roman wall for them, to show them where Lon-

don began, but the visitors just stand gazing out with blank expressions over the endless roofs. It is too big to explain away in a ten-minute talk!

I wonder what they are really thinking. Is that man thinking, "A fool is born every minute down there," or is he thinking, "Millions of homes and millions of people searching for happiness, suffering . . . loving, hating, and everywhere something good in the very worst of them . . ." Is he? No. He takes out his watch, looks alarmed, and says to his wife in an injured voice:

"What about tea?"

They leave London to others and climb downstairs.

II

EVERY morning soon after 9 a.m. a big green char-à-banc draws up near the office of the American Express Company in the Haymarket.

The men passengers stand around buying the Paris editions of New York and Chicago papers; the women talk. Mothers form groups and tell each other which theater they visited the previous evening; the daughters form

groups and talk about being back home for college in the "fall." Such a buzz of conversation:

"We're crazy to see the Tower of London, for we sail to-morrow. . . ."

"My, isn't it cold? Everything warm I have is on me. . . ."

"We wanted to make Boston early this fall, but we've got to see Paris yet. . . ."

"And no central heating! So we came back right away. . . ."

"And the drafts! Don't these English people love drafts that shake out your back teeth? That's why we left Warwickshire!"

Near by, on the edge of the pavement, stands an elderly entertainer who rises early to give the United States a series of statuesque poses with the aid of a felt hat from which the crown has been cut; now he is Napoleon, now he is Nelson, now Scrooge, now a monk, now a coy young woman. . . .

"See here, Billy, hand him some of these pennies. I can't carry them around any longer . . ."

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, kindly take your seats!"

There is a commotion; the knowledge is borne home that Mistinguette has many rivals, and

soon the char-à-banc with stern faces, sallow faces, pretty faces, moves off into London.

"This on your left is Trafalgar Square. The column was erected to a great English sailor—Admiral Lord Nelson!"

It all sounds exceeding strange to me; but I put on a pair of horn-rimmed glasses and gaze up at Horatio as though I am really glad to have him know me.

"On your right is Cleopatra's Needle . . . You have the companion obelisk in Central Park . . . and on your left is a building known as Somerset House."

I shrink back in my seat. I can pretend that I had never seen Nelson before, but to be shown the G.H.Q. of the income tax gives me a queer little ache.

"Here is the Inland Revenue Department . . ."

The whole coach load gaze up at this regrettable pile with faces which prove that they had never been hurt by it. How glorious, I think, to be able to look at Somerset House dispassionately.

At Cannon Street we are held up by traffic.

"And *now* you are in the City of London," says the guide.

"Then where have we been for the last fort-

night?" asks a very pretty young Middle Westerner.

"Westminster," replies her husband, who has a map.

I gather that she is not quite clear about this. I want to explain to her: I long to tell her that London was planned by the Romans and that everything outside the now vanished wall is not the City of London, is just adipose tissue; but I dare not—I am a tourist.

The Tower of London!

We enter the wicket gate. Here is one of the fortresses of Romance, soaked in history, steeped in cruelty, in crime, in heroism. William the Conqueror built it to show London that he intended to stay there. It is interesting to reflect that the Tower is to-day, as it always has been, a fortress and a prison. It is still garrisoned by troops; there were prisoners within its mighty walls during the War. It is still His Majesty's Tower: it does not belong to London but to the King. It always has been ready to shelter the King if the need arose. Every night it is locked up at ten with curious ceremonial, and after that time no man can gain admittance without the password. The only men outside its walls who know this pass-

word, which is changed every night, are the King and the Lord Mayor of London.

There was an American officer stationed at the Tower during the War. He went out one night and forgot to get the password so in the early hours of the morning he stood outside begging to be admitted. The Chief Warder was awakened and, taking the octagonal lantern with a candle in it which he carries round each night at the locking-up ceremony, he marched to the wicket gate to interview the late-comer.

"I know who you are," said the Chief Warder, "but rules are rules and if you were the Prince of Wales himself I wouldn't let you in without the password! That's final."

"But—have a heart—what am I to do?" asked the American.

"One of two things," replied the Warder. "Go and get a bed at the Cannon Street Hotel and come back when the gates are open in the morning or let us arrest you and put you in the guardroom."

The officer thought a moment.

I guess you'd better arrest me," he said.

They put him in the guardroom where they fixed up a shake-down for him. In the morning he walked into the mess.

"Gee, that was fine!" he said. "I wouldn't have missed that for a million dollars! I've been a prisoner in the Tower of London; and I'm alive to tell the tale!"

We stand in a bunch watching the sentry in his scarlet tunic and—Gee!—how our eyes light up at the sight of our first Yeoman Warder in his Tudor bonnet! In the Byward Tower we look at the Heath Robinsonian wheels and ropes which in ancient days lowered the wooden port-

cullis. This portcullis is still there, a piece of mighty fretwork. If they let it down in your face there was no good hammering; you had to consult a gunpowder expert.

"Can this portcullis still be used?" asks a practical visitor from Chicago.

"Oh, yes," replies the warder, "it was lowered recently by the Office of Works' officials and it went down smoothly and sweetly."

We all smile! We like to imagine that great brute of a gate, made to defy the King's ene-

mies, descending like a maiden's sigh. Smoothly and sweetly! (We must remember to put that in our diaries! That's a new one on us!)

Up and round, and round and up we go into the Salt and Broad Arrow Towers. Cold, heartless rooms! What must it have felt like to hear the great doors slam and to know that for years these rooms would be your world till the Man in the Black Mask, leaning on his axe, was ready to give you release?

Plate glass covers the words cut by prisoners in the stones. So beautifully done, of course, for they had time to put into them the love and effort they might have put into life. Hew Draper, Sir Everard Digby are two names that send you to the Encyclopædia, Michael Moody, Henry Walpole . . . initials, little patterns, and, so human and pathetic, hearts with words inside them like those which lovers cut in trees. . . .

But the Martin Tower thrills and grips. Here is the scene of three wonderful stories—one of theft, one of imprisonment, and one supernatural. Till 1841 the Crown Jewels were housed here. Here in the reign of Charles II took place that astonishing plot to steal them. A daring rogue called Colonel Blood disguised himself as a parson, and made friends with the

aged deputy-keeper and his wife. He suggested that his nephew should marry their daughter. One day, with four companions, one of whom pretended to be the bridegroom, Blood entered the Jewel House, gagged the old man, and might have got clear with the jewels if the keeper's son, just home from Flanders, had not rushed in. There was a wild stampede, in which Blood and a man called Parrot departed with the Globe and the Crown of England! But they were captured. The Crown fell in the dirt, a pearl was picked up by a sweeper, a diamond by an apprentice, and several stones were lost.

The strangest part of the story is that no one was punished! In fact, Blood eventually was received at Court, and given a pension of £500 a year!

We go upstairs. Here took place the most dramatic haunting in the history of the Tower. One Saturday night in October, 1817, Mr. E. L. Swifte, the Keeper of the Jewels, was sitting at supper with his wife in this small room when, to their horror, a pale mist formed over the table: a white thing that seemed palpitating with a queer bluish light. It moved slowly to Mrs. Swifte, who cried, "Oh, God, it has seized me!" Her husband hit it with a chair, and it slowly moved round the room and vanished.

It was outside this tower, soon after, that a sentry saw a shapeless mass issuing from under the Jewel Room door. He lunged at it with his bayonet, which passed straight through it and stuck in the wood. He was picked up unconscious, and would have been sentenced by court martial but evidence was given that some one in the officers' mess near by had heard him challenge, had seen him lunge and fall to the ground.

In this Martin Tower, we are reminded of Harry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, soldier, scholar, lover of children, books and flowers, who, could he only have shut his hot mouth, might have been one of the greatest men of his time. He spent sixteen years reading, studying, loud-voiced and hot-headed. (The Tower was a kind of inevitable hotel for the fighting Percys!) Here he knew Raleigh. They talked and studied together, dreamed together of discovering the Elixir of Life. The Tower must have had its points in those days! Harry Percy studied so deeply that he was called the "Wizard Earl."

When his daughter married a Court favorite and obtained her father's pardon, old Harry Percy was so angry at the thought of accepting any favor from an upstart son-in-law that he

refused to leave the Tower! The Lieutenant told him that if he would go a salute of cannon would be fired in his honor. He merely turned to his books, and probably swore. At length he fell ill, and his children tactfully extracted him from his self-made prison. But how hard the devil died in him! No sooner had he reached home than he learned that the Duke of Buckingham was driving about London in a coach and six. He set up a howl of rage! How dare a Villiers outdo a Percy in pomp? He ordered eight horses to take him round town!

We drift on slowly, and what do you think a fife band is playing near the Bloody Tower? "Marching Through Georgia"! We all smile! We watch a guard being mounted, and we can hardly be dragged away to see the Crown Jewels; but when we do see them I think we agree unanimously that they make Tiffany's look like something out of a Christmas cracker. . . .

"And does he wear that crown? You don't say! That's ermine round the edge to keep his poor head from cracking. 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,' you bet! Now I get the meaning of that!"

We see the axe. We admire the armor; and we are just like children hearing a story for the first time. We are "thrilled." I know this,

because, as we are leaving, a big man who had not shown any particular interest whispers to his wife, "England's a whale of a place, isn't it?"

We leave the Tower; we pile into our char-à-banc; we go slowly through the crowded, sunny streets; we admire the Guildhall and its pigeons; we dive into the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral; and we run smoothly down Ludgate Hill and up Fleet Street.

"Funny Americans, always looking at things!"

Curious London faces gaze up at us from the crowds, and wonder what we see in "things."

III

YOU will go to Westminster Abbey early in the morning before the crowds gather. As you walk up the wide, paved path to the north door you will see, I hope, not the Abbey of to-day, that magnificent Early English poem in stone, but the little Saxon Church built on Thorney Isle in the year 616 by the first Christian king of the East Saxons, Sebert.

How difficult it is to forget modern London and to look back to those distant days when

the missionaries from Rome were walking staff in hand through England speaking to the Saxon Kings under great oak trees in a wood. London at this time still lay behind its Roman Wall. Only two hundred years had passed since it was a city of the Roman Empire! Many a Saxon shepherd lived in the ruins of a Roman villa, building his fire on a pavement bright with pictures of the old gods. And some distance from London over the green fields and the river marshes King Sebert built the "minster in the west."

Centuries were to pass before the Abbey which we know formed itself from the series of earlier churches. They served their day at least and once fell into smoking ruins when the long boats of the Danes crept up the Thames.

The Westminster Abbey of to-day took shape in the latter half of the 13th Century. Henry III. and his son Edward I. built it; and it remains much as they knew it.

There is no spot more sacred to the English people. This great church which began as a little Saxon chapel on an island in the Thames, has since the days of Harold, the last Saxon King, been the place in which the kings of England have been crowned, the place in which their bones have been laid to rest. Here lie the great

Englishmen of all periods. It is the Temple of England's Fame.

In the silence of the high nave you will people the church with old pageants, you will sit there with the helpless feeling that there are hundreds of pictures which you cannot quite pull from the past, you will be baffled by the very richness of the memories, by the very holiness of this ground. You will see the church in its ancient glory as a Roman Catholic monastery, the monks chanting in the choir behind the great screen, the nave open to the people of London. You will see it shorn of its grandeur, and its lands, at the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Adventuring far back into history, you may try to imagine it as it looked when William the Conqueror was crowned there, the stones ringing to the sound of chain mail and to the chink of the Norman spurs. Over how many a royal catafalque will you see the unbleached candles guttering in their tall sconces . . .

It will occur to you in the silence of the Abbey that if there be such things as ghosts surely this is the most haunted spot on earth. What must it be like in the stillness of night; what strange things may creep from the centuries in which they hide? You will attempt

to conjure up one or two of the pageants which jostle each other in the long perspective of history . . .

It was to the Abbey that young Richard II., a boy king, came riding to his Coronation on a glorious morning in July 1377. He came on a white charger under a blue velvet canopy whose silver poles were carried by eight knights in splendid armour. So long was the following banquet in Westminster Hall that the poor boy fainted and had to be carried to his palace! It was while at Mass at the High Altar of Westminster this same boy heard that the rebels under Wat Tyler were massing at Smithfield. It was from the Abbey that he rode to meet them, a mere lad of sixteen, and on Smithfield he spurred his horse among them, crying: "I am your king, follow me!" And they did.

The Abbey saw the funeral of this king's young wife. Her death from the plague nearly drove him mad. They brought her by night to the Abbey. The great church was bright in the light of a thousand candles. All the peers and their wives were commanded to attend the funeral. The women wore long cloaks of black velvet. On this occasion the Earl of Arundel, desiring to leave the ceremony before it was over, made his excuses to the king, who beside

himself with grief and irritation knocked him down so that his head struck a step of the High Altar and covered it in blood. The service was interrupted until the King and the Earl had shaken hands. And the Abbey saw the last strange pageant in the life of this unhappy king. It was to the Abbey of Westminster that his body was brought fourteen years after his miserable death in Pontefract Castle. Henry V. ordered it to be carried in solemn state from Langley and laid to rest in the tomb beside Anne, his wife. . . .

You will walk through the royal tombs, admiring that splendid Chapel which Henry VII. built to contain his body (at the same time ordering his executors to avoid "dampnable pompe and outrageous superfluities"!) You will enter the Chapel of Edward the Confessor where stands the old Coronation Chair, enclosing the famous "Stone of Scone" in which every monarch since Edward I. has been crowned. If you are in search of American associations you will find the monument of Major André. The bas-relief shows a file of soldiers with muskets which suggests that he was shot; which is not so. Washington hanged him as a spy. His body lay on the banks of the Hudson for forty years before it was

brought to England. In the north cloister lies General Burgoyne. In the Abbey rest Chatham and Fox who fought for the rights of the American "rebels." Near the Chapter House, where the first Parliaments of England met, is a window to the memory of James Russell Lowell.

England and America meet on common ground in Poet's Corner. This is a holy ground to the English speaking people. "I have always observed," wrote Washington Irving, "that the visitors to the Abbey remain longest about the simple memorials in Poet's Corner. A kinder and fonder feeling takes the place of that cold curiosity or vague admiration with which they gaze on the splendid monuments of the great or the heroic. They linger about these as about the tombs of friends or companions."

Friends or companions! Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Samuel Johnson, Garrick, Sir Henry Irving, Robert Burns, Goldsmith, Scott, Dickens, Ruskin, Thackeray, Macaulay—and many more.

Go to the Chapel of Bishop Islip to see the eleven wax figures of kings and queens. It was the custom in ancient times to show the embalmed bodies of the great at their funerals but in later times wax or wooden effigies re-

placed the actual bodies. These figures have all the interest of contemporary portraits.

In the nave, opposite the great west door, you will find the tomb of an unknown man, the only one in the Abbey. You will think, no doubt, the inscription is the finest in a church that is packed with epitaphs:

"Beneath this stone," it reads, "rests the body of a British warrior, unknown by name or rank, brought from France to lie among the most illustrious of the land . . . ." and so on to its magnificent end: "They buried him among the kings because he had done good toward God and toward His House . . ."

The brass letters round this tomb are made from cartridge cases taken from the battlefields of France. The bones of the Unknown Soldier lie in French soil. Near him hangs the flag that covered many a communion table in Flanders. On the pillar of the nave hangs the Congressional Medal of Honor, the gift of the people of the United States and the highest order in their power to bestow.

It is good to leave the Abbey—its kings and queens, its soldiers, sailors, poets, statesmen—with the memory of this tomb, magnificent in the stark simplicity of its emotion, lying near

the great west door, the first tomb in the Abbey church.

IV

COOL, green water. . . .

It is so cool that just to look at it is like a damp sheet wrapped round you. It is so peaceful, so still, so green with depth. There is constant music of it trickling and gurgling and plopping and making all the sounds that cool green water makes. You look at it, not down into it, but at it, as if you were walking about on the bottom of the sea in a diver's dress. When you look up it is a long way to the surface where the sunlight plays and flickers, sending down shafts of light which are immediately put on ice by so much cool, green water. . . .

A blue fish with a scarlet waistcoat sails out from some remote grey cave wearing gold-rimmed eyes. It looks at you stolidly for a bit; it opens its mouth as if it were going to say, "Good heavens, there's Alfred!" and then, after rudely blowing a portion of its breakfast at you, turns with a sharp twist of its green tail and shoots through the shadowy greenness

and is lost to sight. Little quicksilver air bubbles ascend in a straight line through the water and burst on the surface above. Green and brown trailing plants sway this way and that as the waters stir. How deliciously cool, how comforting, a place where heat has never been known! Look! Another fish with gold-rimmed eyes swims up, frolics, lets the water swirl and cascade over its glittering body! There is no sound but the trickle and gurgle and plop of cool, green water. No light but that which filters through cool, green water . . . cool, green light.

This is the Zoo aquarium, the only place in London where you can forget eighty degrees in the shade!

If I were a fish I would not like to be a trout. It would be as bad as belonging to a very large family. You bunch together all day, facing one way with your noses in a bubble stream, just moving your fins a bit to keep steady, waiting for something to come your way. Then when it comes you all dash at it as one. A poor, overcrowded life.

I would not like to be one of those dopey fishes covered with warts which sit in caves like Diogenes in his barrel just moping and letting

the water plants tickle their whiskers. Some have even been fitted with ball-bearing eyes to save them the trouble of turning round. No zest in this sort of existence, no pep, no go-getting. And eels are no better. It must be exceedingly unpleasant to be such an untidy size, all over the place at once, one-half of you not knowing how the other half lives and every kind of haddock running into a section of you without apologizing. Then there are queer, eccentric fish so curiously designed, so complex, so replete with spare parts, so fitted by evolution for any emergency that life must be one confounded puzzle to remember whether the rope growing from your chest was put there in case of fire or tempest.

Poor fish, all of them.

Ah! the happy fish is the lemon sole!

With lemons ruled out as one of life's little ironies, a sole is about the happiest thing in water and the loveliest to watch in a heat wave. If you were a sole you would have the most delightful accordion-pleated sides to you, your eyes would be together on top of your head in the handiest way, so that when you wanted to lie in the sand you could see what is going on above. You would do a lot of swimming. You

would get the full value out of cool, green water.

You would agitate your accordion pleats and find yourself curving and dipping and somersaulting through the sparkling depths, doing cart wheels over flounders and spotted plaice, looping the loop round air bubbles, and fluttering down through the sweet sea water, snapping your fins at the outrageous thought of Meunière, Colbert, or Bordelaise.

Then you would always have the lobsters to laugh at.

With one eye out of the sand you would meditate on the mysterious, remote world beneath the waves to which you belong. A different order of life, a shadowy marvel of a world in which nature has played the most astonishing practical jokes with anatomy in order to perpetuate her species, and you might wonder who was the first fish that took the wrong turning and blundered out on land looking for trouble, fated to pile up all succeeding woe—the silly little fool!

But the lobster would bring you back to primal things. He is a prehistoric monster in mail. Did nature design him as the conqueror of the universe and then get fed up with him and leave him, cutting her losses on so much specialization? The time she spent on fitting up

lobsters, designing a new type of arm here, a new aërial there—marvelous! All he does in return is to stand for days together tic-tacking to another lobster with his antennæ. Something missing, some little quality absent, one of nature's bad bargains! The fellow was made to conquer empires: he is a living fortress, the natural born soldier. What a failure! His boot-button eyes register no emotion. If any tender passion ever beats beneath his unboiled shirt for the little hen lobster with the bluey-green shoulders, no one ever knows; like Viola, he never tells his love, but lets concealment like a worm in the bud feed on his damask cheek—the very pattern of those strong, silent men so loathed by women.

But a sole! To be a flighty, accordion-pleated sole in cool, green waters, flirting gaily with a jet of ozonized air, feeling the cold swirl of the waves on your pearl-white underneath, lazily letting them blow out your pleats as a thin garment is blown by the wind . . . ah! . . .

"Beg pardon, sir, closing time!"

"But I haven't half done yet! Oh! well . . ."

How beautiful is water, so peaceful, so still, so green with depth!

V

THE King is out of town. They are mounting the guard in St. James's Palace. When the King is in London the ceremony takes place in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace, but I prefer to see the scarlet parade packed into the beautiful little Friary Court of St. James's, one side of which is open to the street. . . .

It is eleven o'clock. The old guard and the new guard are drawn up facing each other at opposite ends of the court. The bright scarlet of their tunics, the sharp whiteness of their belts and rifle slings, the jet blackness of their bearskins form a splendid splash of color backed by the tender tints of the old Palace, the weathered Tudor red brick and the grey stone of later date. In the far corner of the court the band stands in a circle playing "The Mikado." The subaltern of the old guard and subaltern of the new guard walk up and down chatting together, holding their drawn swords. The majors do this; so do the two tall young men who carry the colors over their shoulders.

I look up at the Palace windows, thinking perhaps of Charles II and pretty ladies, and I note that high up on the roof, almost hidden

by the grey battlements, a maidservant has come out to watch the show. She looks down on it as the princess in a fairy tale might watch from a turret!

What a crowd! It closes the fourth side of the square. It contains provincial visitors gathering an unforgettable memory of London, foreign visitors gathering an unforgettable memory of England, Londoners who can never resist the temptation to linger, and loungers who look wistful, as if trying to make up their minds to "go back to the Army again."

The band plays on, softly, deliciously:

The flowers that bloom in the spring,
Tra la,
Have nothing to do with the case.
I've got to take under my wing,
Tra la,
A most unattractive old thing,
Tra la,
With a caricature of a face.
And that's what I mean when I say
or I sing.
Oh, bother the flowers that bloom in the spring . . .

Then it gallops to the "tra la's" and old men beat their walking sticks on the ground and girls sing under their breath. But the scarlet

parade stands stock still. The wind blows into the black bearskins. A busy sergeant-major crosses the court with his chest out as if he were about to crow, rams his stick under his arm, hurls his head round towards the two majors, and flashes a white-gloved hand to the big black hearthrug on his head.

"Oh, listen what they're playing now!" says a girl.

They are playing a waltz! Such a waltz! Such a dreamy, sloppy, sentimental waltz! And I feel obscurely touched by the contrast of this waltz and two guards standing in full war paint. I would much rather go over the top to a waltz tune than to the best war song ever written. I don't know why. . . .

Crash! The band ceases! Something is happening!

Fixed bayonets glitter an instant under an archway. Words of command ring out. The band, with its scarlet chest covered in gold braid, forms up in marching order. Mounted police move the crowd back to the edge of the pavement, leaving the road clear. . . .

"Eyes—right! . . . Eyes—front!"

Somebody at the back with a ten-bull-power voice on rusty hinges is straightening things out. Salutes!

"Rat-a-plan . . . rat-a-plan . . ." says a kettledrum quickly.

The officers take posts! More commands. The guards present arms. The colors are lifted high above the fluffy black heads. Compliments of the new guard to the old guard. . . .

"Sl—ow, march!"

The band moves off playing the slow march, the decorative drum major, with his drumstick held across his medaled chest, slow stepping, toes pointed. The old guard follows. Heads are bared as the color comes past: American, Italian, French and English heads. On they come. The wind plays with the color, a deep crimson flag with dozens of names embroidered in gold. I see "Corunna," "Tel-el-Kebir," "Se-

bastopol," and many more words that sing in my head, and I know that I am watching in this ordinary everyday London show something whose roots go deep into ancient gallantry, old sacrifices . . . "unhappy far-off things and battles long ago."

As the color comes level with me the wind pulls out a fold, and clear in the morning sun I read "Ypres."

I find myself looking into the eyes of a shabby young fellow next to me.

"Ypres!" he says. Then softly: "Wipers!"

The band breaks into a cheery march, the troops change step, the crowd scatters, and, high up among the grey battlements of the Palace, Princess Cinderella gives a little satisfied pat to her hair and goes down, presumably to earth.

VI

AS YOU go through the gates of the Royal Mews at Buckingham Palace a coachman in a long fawn coat takes your card of admission, you sign your name in a book, and a royal groom in a pink coat, white breeches and cockaded hat waits to show you "all the King's horses."

It is possible that the nearest American will ask you a question which probably few Londoners could answer:

"Why are these stables called Mews? What does the word mean?"

If so reply as follows:

"Mew is an archaic word applied to the cage in which hawks were kept when molting. Centuries ago when falconry was a royal sport the King's hawks were kept in Mews at Charing Cross. Geoffrey Chaucer was 'Clerk of the King's Works and of the Mews at Charing.' These buildings stood where the National Gallery now stands. In 1534 the royal stables at Bloomsbury were burned down and in the emergency the King's hawks were turned out of their Mews at Charing Cross and the King's horses stabled there instead. The name has stuck to the royal stables ever since. . . ."

Having answered that you can move on, respected by all.

In the center of the huge courtyard, in which State carriages parade before a great occasion, grow four tall plane trees, and near by is an extremely hard tennis court on which a coachman and three coachmen's wives are playing a game. There is a clatter on the cobbles. Six

horses are led in, looking rather pleased, for they have just arrived at Court from Balmoral.

"Now here are carriage horses!" says your guide.

You enter the most perfect stable you have ever seen. Neatly plaited rye wisps lie on either side the passageway like yellow fringe to the carpet of straw in each stall. The floor is dusted with red sand. Brass shines; harness shines; horses shine. This is a scene that must rejoice the heart of the Master of the King's Horse.

In the stalls are the big bay beauties which every one in London has seen high-stepping before State landaus when the King and the Queen go out. There is a clink of chains, a nuzzling at feeds; big eyes are turned in your direction. Horseshoes have rubber caps to prevent a slip on a wet road.

"Those two are the pair that drew Princess Mary's carriage on her wedding day."

The two big fellows stabled side by side look in one another's stalls as if discussing their joint distinction.

"These are riding horses."

You are in another stable. Names are inscribed over each stall.

"Allegro."

That is Princess Mary's horse.

"Haig."

Here is the horse that Earl Haig rode in France and afterward presented to the King.

"Basuto."

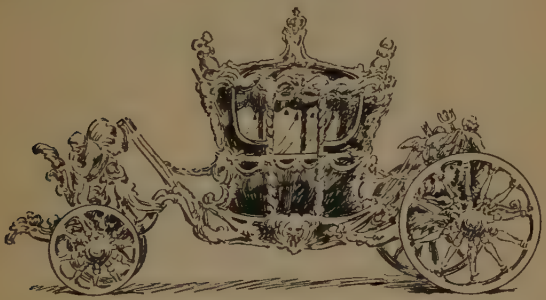
A queer, light-colored, sharp little pony that was given to the King by a native chief in Africa.

In an adjoining room is the Royal Mews Museum. Here are saddlecloths used by King Edward and bridles for at least a dozen cavalry regiments. Here is the Prince Consort's saddle, and a saddle used by Queen Victoria. In the harness room are the State trappings slung on wooden racks. You admire the marvelous red morocco and gilt-embossed harness used when the great gold State coach goes through London to the opening of Parliament. This is the harness that once lay over the backs of the famous Hanoverian cream ponies that now, alas! have been sold.

What a marvelous business is Court etiquette! Here are sets of harness for every degree of rank. When a Buckingham Palace landau clip-clops down to Victoria to meet a king, a prince, a princess, or a president, who ever thinks that the horses have been harnessed with minute care to the exact value of the occasion? Only on the

very grandest days do those lovely flamingo-colored, gold-butted whips, with their snow-white lashes, take the air of town.

There is a long riding school in the Royal Mews—grim, dark, and smelling of tan like all such places—in which princes and princesses have been taught to ease their reins over a box jump. Flags flutter from the roof.



"This is where we make new carriage horses accustomed to street sights and sounds," explains the groom. "When we train them we beat drums in here and blow bugles and wave flags. Those banners hanging from the roof make them accustomed to going through decorated streets. When you come to consider how nervous horses are you realize what a lot our horses have to go through during ceremonial drives in London."

Then the coronation coach. . . . They save that for the last!

It stands in a coach house by itself, a glittering mass of wrought gilt, its huge wheels, with their outward bent spokes, the beautiful glass-house of a body swung on great leather springs. It is a gigantic coach. No one can estimate its size from watching it pass slowly down the street; it is necessary to stand on a level with it and look up. Then you realize that when an English king is driven to his coronation he must feel that he is swinging in a cradle slung between heaven and earth!

It was designed in 1762, painted by Cipriani, and five British sovereigns have gone to Westminster Abbey in it: George IV, William IV, Victoria, King Edward, and King George.

"My," says an American, "that's a whale of a coach. How much does it weigh?"

"Four tons," says the coachman.

As you look at it you remember the place it occupied in your nursery days, the very brother coach to that in which Cinderella rode to the ball. . . .

In the courtyard the King's men are still playing tennis with their wives, and, near by, the King's horses stamp in stall; and it seems, from washed cobbles to neat stable door, from

sharp grooms' faces to bow legs, that this grey building has never heard of the motor car.

VII

LITTLE heads all over London are dimly thinking how queer human beings can be, how inconsistent, how unaccountable. . . .

Eleven months of the year are sheer joy (marred by unfortunate lapses from grace when you cannot resist a bite at the vicar's juicy old cat). Generally speaking, life is tremendous fun, especially where there are children; summer a time of walks and adventures; winter a lazy dream before a fire. Then comes August and, suddenly, the gods who so wisely rule your destiny abandon you to solitude. They tell you they hate doing it; but they do it! They explain that dogs are not allowed where they're going, or that the landlady keeps cats! Life is just one confounded cat after another. When there is any trouble in your life you can bet that somewhere a cat's in it up to the whiskers.

You begin to feel uneasy when the chief goddess raids the box room (where you caught a rat once and got chastised for taking it straight up to a tea party) and fusses round, asking

questions: "Milly, where's your bathing costume? . . . Bill, do you want those old flannel trousers? . . . Are you children taking your tennis racquets?"

You sit around mournfully, very interested, and now and then some one pats your head with, "Poor old boy, it's a shame, isn't it?"

Then they go. Incredible! They go! In a taxicab. They kiss you and pat you and tell you that Tom, the gardener's boy, will take you for a walk every day and give you food. As if that mattered! And the lovely, noisy house goes silent, so that you can hear the uncatchable mouse in the china pantry scratching and nibbling on the other side of the door. . . . There is nothing to do but wait and wonder in that dim way of yours.

You spend quite a long time sitting by the front door with your head on one side in case the gods come back. You can't reason ahead, and last year is vague in your mind. You are only acutely conscious that some great natural law has been violated. Each step on the path outside starts your tail whipping the floor, puts a yelp of welcome in your throat, and then . . . it's that unpleasant postman who smells of cat! A letter flops through the letter box. You smell it and yawn. So it goes on.

Tom comes in every day, and sits where he has no right to sit. You don't entirely like Tom. When you were very young he twisted your tail. He reads a letter which Milly left on the mantelpiece! He even—great bones and biscuits—opens the silver box which no one but the great chief god ever touches, and puts one of those brown smoky things in his mouth. And no one will ever know! You can't tell.

"Come on, let's go for a walk."

You go; but it isn't the same. Neither does the food taste as it once tasted when you were happy.

The only good thing about Tom is that he leaves doors open. You creep upstairs through the silent house, rather fearful because, although there is no one there, you are not allowed to do this. A door yields to your nose. You enter a dark room. You pause, and your head goes up in the air. You smell the great chief god! It seems so real. It seems that at any moment he might come in and say, "Hallo, what are you doing here?" You look around, He isn't under the bed or anywhere. . . .

In the next room you smell the great chief goddess, and you sit down among these strong ghosts of people. You give a whimper, and want to fling back your head and howl. It

really is awful! They are here and yet they are not here! You feel you want to jump up and down and wag your tail and wiggle sideways with your head in the carpet and roll over and portray joy in action, but there is no one to jump for, or at; and you are as near tears as a dog can be.

Milly's room is locked, but by snuffling under the crack of the door you receive a marvelous impression of her sweet and artificially pungent personality. It is a veritable hall of memories. Frank's room is locked, too. The young god has also left much of himself behind, even to a faint scent of Pomeranian which comes from the dog of the girl he's engaged to. An objectionable, provocative scent. . . .

In the darkness of the night there is a scratch at a window. Something bad outside sends the mane up on your back as you leap like a fury with bared fangs and a deep war cry in your throat, instinctively defensive, ready to leap into the most bloody battle for those who have left you. The noise dies, the horrid presence outside goes. You sleep.

Perhaps—if you are a very clever dog—you dream of the unforeseeable day when, quite suddenly, the doors will open and all joy will rush back into life, all gladness, all fun.

"Down, boy, down!" they will cry. "Down, boy!"

Then:

"My dear, how thin he is! Why, boy—*you haven't been eating your food!*"

What does that matter now—the gods are home. . . .

SEPTEMBER: *Red leaves come to town—you watch the East End in Hyde Park—you admire the Pigeons of St. Paul's.*

THE ADMIRALTY ARCH

SEPTEMBER

I

IT IS good to be in London in September when the fingers of autumn are outstretched to the trees. The little daisies of St. Michael are almost ready to crown the year with purple. Each park, each garden, each poor patch of green becomes an island of autumn in which you can feel that rich hush, as of a task well done, that falls over open country when the corn is cut and the orchards are heavy with their harvest. The moods of London are infinite. These stones are sensitive.

I deceive myself sometimes into the belief that I can smell hay at Ludgate Hill in the very heart of London. It would not be surprising. Go up to the dome of St. Paul's on a clear day when there is a wind that blows away the smoke and you will be delighted to realize that, big as London is, she still lies in a great cup whose rim is green. You can still see green hills from St. Paul's. And from these green places there steals into town a breath of autumn to drift through

the streets and meet you suddenly at the Bank, filling you with a beautiful melancholy.

In the flagged courts of the Temple the damp leaves, as if cut in brown paper, lie flattened on the stones, or they sail crisply to earth to lie waiting for the first wind to pull them into a measure and leave them against walls as a rustic might leave his exhausted partner at a country dance. Over Georgian buildings lies the Virginia creeper, its leaves beginning to suggest that they have been dipped in wine. There is a mellow stillness in the air of London that makes you think of country places and red apples lying in a rough circle at the feet of the trees.

In the evening, when the troubled, pale sky fades into dusk and stars, have you felt in the streets of London—those hard, long, lamp-lit avenues—an autumn sadness, as though the barren earth beneath was longing for children, as though wise, sad Piccadilly found it in a stony heart to envy some quiet Kentish orchard happy with red fruit? Sometimes in September I half expect to turn out of the congested Strand into a lane heavy with fruit, the ghost of some ancient autumn.

Autumn is eternal, and perhaps she whispers in the stone forests of London, as she whispered

in the streets of Babylon, "Wait only a little, and you shall bear fruit again."

It is in the parks of London that she holds her court. The Serpentine is whipped into little waves, the leaves slant down to earth, and girls with wind-blown skirts pass over the grass, heads down before a petulant, changing breeze. Old men sit on green seats quietly smoking, watching without much interest a cantering chestnut mare carrying a girl down the Row. The old men turn up their coat collars and cannot bring themselves to face the club—yet.

The sky pales; the brown leaves dance; a star shines. Over there beyond the rails the traffic frets. Lights are lit. Slender motor cars glide by. The old men see there in a pink light young girls and young men laughing on their way to dinner or theater.

It is dark; and the old men sigh and prepare to go. They rise up out of their autumn dreams; and the leaves still fall. I like to think that they have been thinking about some Argive Helen who has come back most beautifully to them in the dusk.

I may be wrong. Perhaps they think only of grouse and partridge or sit there composing a new apéritif. But—well, I don't think so. . . .

I like to give them the benefit of the doubt.

II

THE family cannot afford to snatch a few hectic days by the sea at Southend or at Margate, because railway fares alone would eat up a week's wages. So London must be the playground and give them a holiday.

Mother packs a wicker basket with sandwiches, bread and cheese, and bottles of lemonade (and a supply of milk for Alfred, who has not yet joined in the general competition to eat his parents out of house and home), while father, as if revealing a secret, produces a cricket bat, and most marvelous to behold, wickets.

When you have been accustomed to cricket with a cast-off coat as the target for your googlies, real wickets seem the last word in style and tone. The children, instinctively realizing that these things are a remarkable phenomenon in a life which contains few such rash extravagances, crowd round, handle them reverently, and feel that it is going to be a wonderful holiday.

They all arrive in Hyde Park early in the

day to seek out a secluded spot. This is not simple, for too many others are at the same game. However, the sharp slope upwards from the Serpentine towards the Marble Arch side of the Park affords considerable boskiness. In fact, a Londoner of a Virgilian turn of mind could believe himself in a fit setting for a Georgic, a conviction helped out here and there by the town's equivalent of a shepherd sporting with Amaryllis in the shade. Through the ancient trees the Serpentine gleams like silver. On the road below pass horsemen and horsewomen, giving to the Cockney just that pathetic reassurance of humanity and—dare I say?—civilization which is entirely lacking in the frightening solitude of real country.

Bill, Mrs. Bill, and family establish Alfred in a place of safety on a pile of coats, from which he gazes blue-eyed, his mouth deformed by an india-rubber "comforter," and his remarks rendered quite negligible. Then they hurl themselves into the holiday with deliberate abandon. Maudie, all leg and flying hair, fields in slip; John bowls; Alice keeps wicket; Tom retires to an indefinite position in the aloof distance; father bowls; mother bats.

Mother is twenty-eight, and looks thirty-eight, because, like half the women on earth,

she is immolated on the altar of the next generation. If her beloved family could be chloroformed for a month and she allowed to rest in some quiet place she might look less consumptive. However, to-day she is radiantly happy, for she has father and family together in an atmosphere of gaiety. She has forgotten the man with the rent-book, the gas meter, the eternal problem of food, and a thousand things which to her mean married life.

"Ready?" says father. He bowls an underhand lob. She makes a slash at it, turns completely round, the ball lodges in her skirt, and she begins frantically to score runs. They stump her! The field comes in discussing M.C.C. rules, to hold an inquest on her short life as a batsman!

"All right; have another go! We won't count that!" says father.

They start again. Mother hits them all over Hyde Park, and looks like making a century. Suddenly there are cries of anguish from the coat dump. Alfred's mouth resembles the entrance to a scarlet cave; his eyes are closed in the sheer enthusiasm of his sorrow; tears catch each other up on his pink cheeks. Mother drops the bat at the call of her life's mission! She bends over Alfred and produces a bottle. His

passion ends as suddenly as it began. The game of cricket proceeds.

Through a sunny afternoon the humble London family find ease and happiness in Hyde Park.

Exhausted by the tireless demands of youth, mother and father lie on the grass and watch life going by on the path below. Tom and John desire to bathe in the Serpentine; so do Maudie and Alice, but that is not allowed. The girls sadly watch their brothers go down to that spot where a solemn policeman holds up the traffic and waves back women and girls, while half a hundred shrimp-pink little boys shout and splash in the cold water. If mixed bathing is evil in the eyes of Hyde Park it is a pity that the countless small girls who will not visit the seaside this year cannot be allowed the privilege extended to their brothers.

"Hyde Park!" says father, lying flat on his stomach and watching the silver glint of the Serpentine through the trees. He says nothing else, not given to reverie or the excavation of his feelings; but his wife understands. It was in Hyde Park they met, in Hyde Park they "walked out," in Hyde Park she promised to marry him, and now Hyde Park offers to them

and their children the one recreation of their hard year. . . .

Dusk falls; the dull mutter of London breaks against the green circle of trees and grass; the first star appears; the basket is packed up, the stumps drawn, and these children of London go out into the falling night well content with their holiday—to return again to-morrow!

"It's as good as Margit any day!" says father softly.

"Course it is!" says mother with a little too much animation. "Why spend all that money —even if you had it?"

She looks at him with a smile, knowing that he does not believe this, and—knowing that he knows she does not believe it either!

III

I LOVE to walk up Ludgate Hill on a September morning to stand before the wide sweep of the Cathedral steps watching a stolid British citizen posed like a statue with a pigeon on his hat. St. Paul's from Ludgate Hill is London's most famous vista. I never look at it without wishing that I might have seen that slender Gothic St. Paul's which died in the Great Fire

of 1666; before that there was a smaller St. Paul's built in Saxon times by the first Bishop of London, Mellitus, and this too died in a fire, probably in the year 1087. A magic hill! Before that they say there was a temple there to the Roman Diana. . . . Now the mighty Georgian mammoth of Sir Christopher Wren dominates the City of London; and at its feet are pigeons.

Every day of the year all manner of people place corn in their pockets and go out to make friends with the pigeons of St. Paul's. The pigeon is a bird which has never moved me to enthusiasm, but at the same time I can appreciate how it is that certain people have a passion for these quick-nodding, iridescent birds, with their delicate mulberry-colored feet and their expressionless eyes like spots of jet in a circle of amber. They have one great attraction. Whereas it is impossible to distinguish one rook from another, or one thrush from another, the pigeon develops such variety in coloring that, watching a flight of them, it is possible to pick out one bird and follow its movements, and even imagine that it has an individuality, is bolder, or more timid, than its companions.

Always when a crowd collects round the

pigeons of St. Paul's there comes a man who looks as though feeding stray birds is the one serious moment in his life. And, of course, many people are proud of worse achievements. He is the Man the Birds Love, and he knows it, and is most vain about it.

The crowd regards him almost reverently, and the same crowd that would snigger if he walked down the street with a parrot or a canary on his finger watches him become buried beneath pigeons without seeing anything to smile at. The man looks round quickly, enjoying his distinction. The birds come to him till he looks like an overworked tree. They stand on his hat; they slide, fluttering, down his arms; they perch on his shoulders with their warm little bodies against his cheek; they poise themselves with a great flutter of strong pinions on his outstretched hands and they nod in a circle at his feet, casting quick, beady looks at him.

He fills his mouth with maize and the pigeons put their beaks gently towards his teeth and take the food. Could confidence go further? Such trust in man is not exceeded in London till some one works off the gold brick on a stranger! But this trust is not betrayed; it is perhaps one of the most idyllic sights in the City. . . . St. Francis in a bowler hat.

There are girls who save crumbs from their luncheon, and young men of ragged appearance who look as though they could not afford to give anything away, old men and elderly women. You will notice how pleasant and happy they are during that intent moment of offering. When people are with children or dumb animals they reveal themselves.

Now and again a child stoops down and frightens the birds away by his desperate anxiety to draw them on, or a baby breaks loose from his mooring and staggers among the flock making vague proprietary movements which indicate that in his mind he believes that he stands a chance of catching and holding these bright, colored things. The pigeons of St.

Paul's do not mind; they just run out of his way. One thing only they fear: a sudden noise.

Their alarms are of two kinds: one a semi-fright and the other a unanimous panic. Let someone shut the door of a Ford car. That causes a semi-fright. Half the birds rise in the air, do an uncertain half-wheel, and come to earth again immediately. But—crack! A boy has dropped a hand trolley, or an engine has back-fired, and then you see the whole flight, three or four hundred strong, rise on the very instant with a great rush of wings and wheel in ordered grace against the mottled face of St. Paul's.

As they turn their black shadows sweep across the ground; for one second, as you look up, they are black in the air. Then they wheel, catch the sunshine, and come fluttering down again to their food. . . .

The last grain gone, the men whom the birds love walk off and become lost in the crowd, while the pigeons sit on St. Paul's and, let us hope, return thanks for all quick-lunch bars.

OCTOBER: *London is misty and mellow—you go to Kew—you see the New Lord Mayor of London elected in Guildhall.*

ST. PAUL'S FROM SOUTHWARK

OCTOBER

I

IT IS the first of October. In the early morning a white mist lies over London; the shroud of summer. In Essex and Kent the boys call it a mushroom mist, and then go over the fields with shining, wet boots to find the choice tight "buttons" or the larger kind with flesh-pink gills which spring bone-dry from the wet grass. In London this white mist hangs in squares and streets. Every leaf is wet.

There is no wind, and, in the hush of morning, trees in the square are as still as a scene at the bottom of the sea. The Row in Hyde Park fades into mist from which, now and then, a horseman emerges, the phantom of a second, his horse's breath white on the sharp air. . . .

It is 9.30 a. m. on Blackfriars Bridge. The bridge pulses with traffic, and is loud with the rattle of wheels, the jingle of harness and the sound of motor horns. The river is a study in dark blues, the blue of cigar smoke, a lovely, subtle blue. The training ship is silhouetted

black like a ghost galleon against the graduated background. To the left a string of tied barges is also black; and the reflection of the Southwark side, the ragged wharves, tall chimneys, is projected, trembling, in the water.

Slowly a change comes. You are conscious that above the mist is the sun. You can see Waterloo Bridge faintly etched in blue and grey; just a whisper that a bridge is there; as delicate as the first image that creeps over a photographic plate in the dark room. To the right of the bridge is a white blur as if something is trying hard to shine—the river frontage of Somerset House. The roofs and chimneys of London come to life; the trees of the Embankment increase in number as visibility extends; the blank finger of Cleopatra's Needle emerges.

You leave the Bridge and walk down the Embankment into a silver-grey vista that extends as you advance, revealing the grey ghost of the Houses of Parliament; Westminster Bridge; then, behold! the sun is shining and London comes to life! A church clock strikes ten. . . .

Noon in Piccadilly. One white glove holds up the power of a thousand horses. It falls, and the throbbing line of traffic surges on; the

red omnibuses, in skilful masses, go their ways; the crowds in perpetual motion on the pavements; the women questing round the shop windows; the man who looks at his watch; the girl who comes to him. "Sorry I'm late, dear." "Oh, that's all right!" (Forgotten are the cutting things he meant to say.)

Twinkling peach-colored stockings; pretty faces in the crowd; taxicabs sliding up to the curb; a great going-in and coming-out of shops; and over everything the roar of wheels and the feeling that this is Piccadilly—this is Piccadilly. . . .

And dusk comes down in October with a saffron haze, and we stand on Blackfriars Bridge again. It is 7 p. m. The curve of the Embankment outlined in little lights; the lights of the bridges are strung like a string of pearls round the dark neck of the Thames; a golden car speeds noiselessly towards Westminster. In the sky a dull, brown haze closes down on London; above it the last glow of the sun, faintly pink, shading to pearl grey. . . . Each minute the light is drawn away. There is a red lamp on the river. The bridges are jet black, and through their arches is a shine of Thames water, faintly silver.

Whistler!

Over Charing Cross high in the sky, is a golden glow, a glow with life in it: the lights of London.

II

BUT to see the full beauty of October I go to Kew Gardens to sit on a lonely seat under a tree. And I think that among the eight millions which are London there are many longing for peace to think, for calm to face trouble or sorrow; and here in Kew is the convalescent home for all sore souls.

Over Kew hangs the high, still serenity of October woods, mellow in a duty well fulfilled, calm in the knowledge of a resurrection. Slender trees have faded to pale yellow; some are still green; many are the color of blood or the deeper red of wine. It is so still just now. Such a cathedral hush in the tall aisles. Not one stray breath of wind disturbs the painted pageant of the woods. Trees are repeated leaf for leaf in glass-like water, and all nature seems to be kneeling in prayer. High from the boughs of a thinning tree comes the hymn of the robin, the saddest little song I know. Nothing leads up to it. It is just a delicious phrase of concentrated melancholy which starts in its

fullness and is as suddenly cut short; a sweet requiem to a dead year.

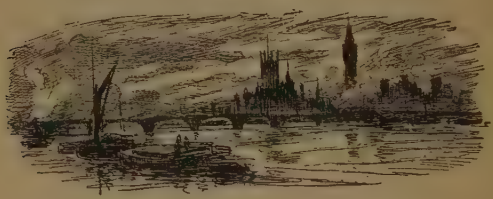
I stay still as stone on my seat. Above me a giant oak which stands in a vast circle of its fallen leaves spreads its boughs. The rustling carpet is alive with grey squirrels, which gradually conquer an ancient fear and play almost within touch. Acorns fall from the oak with a crisp phut! on the leaves. At each fall the little grey fellows cease their restless games and sit up to listen, their tiny front legs hanging at their grey chests, their boot-button eyes very polished, their tails never still; twitching, arching. I watch their undulating whip-lash leaps over the leaves, and I hear the crackle of their teeth against an acorn as they sit up holding the nut in their little hand-like paws, wobbling it against their mouths. At a sudden sound they are gone, and I see them for a minute spread-eagled against the rough bark of a tree and I hear them moving overhead in the safety of its boughs.

This is the time of the year for them, this time of rich brown nuts. Nature spreads a lord mayor's banquet beneath each tree for their busy hands to find.

Long avenues of soft color, the graceful fall of a leaf, grass just touched with the faint silver

of dew, and a small sun, the color of a pale yolk, hanging in a haze . . . complete stillness . . . such perfect stillness and such perfect peace.

Surely it was in autumn that man first developed a sense of beauty. Surely the first artists were born when man observed the flawless workmanship of the woods, the thin-veined leaves, the little brown polished nuts in their spiky coats, the red berries, the fruits: the perfect craftsmanship of nature.



There is a church-like hush in autumn woods, an air of thanksgiving; a solemn stillness in which it seems is "the Voice of the Lord God walking in the garden."

In a dark aisle of the trees are half a dozen children gathering chestnuts. Their high voices echo in the silence:

"Oh, look at this huge one; it's just like a little hedgehog. . . . I've pricked my finger!"

The little girls take off their hats and fill them with the green spiked nuts till they look like hats full of sea urchins. The boys tread out the nuts with their shoes and cram their pockets. They stand ankle deep in the dead leaves, and their movements send up a rich cloud of that pungent autumnal leaf smell, the incense of the woods. . . .

And here is the drama of Kew!

In the trees are grey squirrels peering with beady eyes, venturing halfway down a trunk and scurrying back again, nervous, tail-twitching, indignant! What right have these men-children to steal their nuts? The blackbirds second this vote of censure. They stand in the tree tops making a noise like bags of shaken silver. Chink-chink-chink-chink . . . they cry.

Yellow leaves fall.

The robin, the little philosopher of autumn, sitting apart, pours out his sad heart into the early morning:

"The leaves fall and the fruits fall and life is a very sad business; for winter waits with its frost and its snow. . . ."

Then he pauses for he never finishes his song. Some day, I hope, a robin will go on and give us the last verse:

"The dead trees hold the fresh new leaves and the snow covers the new life, and from the cold arms of winter leaps the swift beauty of the spring. . . ."

III

ONE of those things which make London undoubtedly London happens every ninth of October just before noon.

Those who happen to be passing the Guildhall pause to watch a number of men in scarlet robes, each holding tight little posies of red and yellow chrysanthemums, walk two by two from the church of St. Lawrence Jewry into the grey old Guildhall. There are men in Court dress, legal men in brindle wigs and black gowns, elderly aldermanic men whose spats twinkle strangely beneath fur-trimmed, scarlet robes, the City Marshal in his splendor, the Sword-Bearer in his high fur Cap of Maintenance, the Mace-Bearer, with his glittering symbol of power, and, last of all, the Lord Mayor of London. As the procession enters the Guildhall beadles in jam-puff hats and gold-laced cape coats, like Christmas supplement pictures of eighteenth century night watchmen, make little bobbing bows to their own particular

aldermen, and fall in beside them to conduct them to the "hustings."

"What's it all about? . . . What's happening? . . . Whose birthday is it?" ask the crowd.

"It's Michaelmas Day," explains a bank messenger, "and they are going to choose a new Lord Mayor."

"Oooh! Will they come out again?"

"Yes."

So the crowd proves that it is a London crowd by waiting there for an hour.

This is what happens inside the Guildhall.

Centuries have rolled back. The Lord Mayor, his scarlet sheriffs and the aldermen sit on a dais beneath the great stained window of the Guildhall. Their feet crush dried flowers —old-fashioned herbs, camomile, rosemary, sage —with which since the year of the Plague the "hustings" have been strewn. On the air is the faint, sweet scent of these herbs. Facing the "hustings" sit the liverymen of the companies of the City of London—the Grocers, the Stationers, the Blacksmiths, the Bowyers, the Armorers, the Mercers, the Loriners, the Patternmakers and so on. They look like an ordinary crowd of City men; they wear no badge of their citizenship. The Common Crier

clears his throat and advances to the edge of the dais. He shouts in a loud voice:

"All ye who are not of the Livery depart this hall on pain of imprisonment. Be uncovered in the hall!"

No one moves! How many are interlopers, how many are knaves not licensed to make patterns, armor, bows or horseshoes within the gates of the City? It is a dramatic moment! Assuring himself that we are all good and true liverymen of London, the Common Crier clears his throat again and continues:

"Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! You good men of the Livery of the several companies of this City summoned to appear here this day for the election of a fit and able person to be Lord Mayor of the City for the ensuing year, draw near and give your attention. God Save the King!"

We cannot draw near but we give our attention.

It seems to me, as the formalities are solemnly observed by the group of successful City magnates sitting above us, holding their bright posies, that I am near that quality of mind which explains London's greatness through stormy centuries; that tenacious clinging to tradition, that pride in ancient privileges, the jealous guarding of every letter of an ancient

constitution, which has enabled London to be a kingdom within a kingdom, and to elect a man who for a year may walk before the King's son within the gates of the City.

The aldermen who have "passed the chair" retire. The liverymen give a great shout as names are offered to them for election; and then, having the verdict of the Livery, the aldermen troop out to elect the new Lord Mayor of London. It may be a shadow of a former ceremony, just a pale reflection, but in that reflection something of London's ancient strength.

They come back.

The new Lord Mayor shows himself to the Livery, who applaud him. He promises to be a good Lord Mayor, and the Livery applaud again. Everybody then makes speeches congratulating everybody else, including a member of the cabinet who is described as "Secretary of State for War and Grocer" (I love that "grocer"); and the Court of Common Hall is over.

Outside, the Lord Mayor-elect and the Lord Mayor sit side by side in a swaying State coach drawn by four spanking bay horses. Out of one window sticks the Sword of the City of London; from the other peeps the Mace. Four trumpeters in jockey caps and gold tunics blow

a mighty fanfare, and so proceed, walking slowly, before the coach between lines of Londoners, into Cheapside, and on towards the Mansion House. It is a great moment!

"Tommy rot!" growls a man on the curbstone. I hope he is not a Londoner, for any Londoner who knows his history and sneers at the Lord Mayor should be shown the gate.

"Rot, I call it!" he says again loudly, but no one cares what he thinks. For in those silver trumpets, calling the girls to the windows, scaring the pigeons from Guildhall Yard, is the ancient splendid voice of our City of London.

NOVEMBER: *You see the Lord Mayor's Show—you go to the Cenotaph on the Eleventh—there is Fog.*

WHITEHALL

NOVEMBER

I

THE Coronation procession of the King of a Square Mile takes place wet or fine, rain, sun or snow, on the ninth of November. The Lord Mayor of London has from the earliest time been the undisputed ruler of London. There has never been an Earl of London nor a Duke of London; the City has always been a small self-governing City state ruled by its elected representative. Centuries ago London invested her ruler with pomp and circumstance so that he might talk as man to man with the King of England (as he had occasion to do in the old days when he was invariably His Majesty's banker!) and the Lord Mayor's Show on November 9 is a relic of that mediæval pageantry. The Show is simply the new Lord Mayor's state progress through London to the Law Courts where he takes the oath before His Majesty's judges. . . .

You are passing down Cheapside towards noon. You notice in those narrow lanes

opposite Bow Church which lead to Guildhall strange, varied assemblies. In one short street a squadron of cavalry sit their horses; in another a company of marines or of foot guards stand easy; a third is congested by decorated trolley trucks gay with bunting on whose extemporized stages fair maidens symbolize the glories of Empire; a fourth may be full of boy scouts or anti-aircraft guns; a sixth may shelter the mounted band of the Honorable Artillery Company; a seventh may hold cars drawn by shire stallions on which one or other of the City Livery Companies has staged the drama of its craft.

You linger in these narrow streets, conscious that the spirit of the Middle Ages has inhabited a Georgian body, for the soul of the Lord Mayor's Show is mediæval while its figure is eighteenth century: periwigged, silk-stockinged, velveted, rapiered. The decorated car on which a band of beautiful typists represent the bounties of Australia is older by several centuries than the Lord Mayor's Golden Coach!

When the great magistrates of the Middle Ages rode, or, rowed, in state to submit their loyalty to the King, or to his justiciar, at Westminster, the state in which they traveled was a reflection of London's importance: a sign that

London alone among the cities of the realm could invest its elected ruler with the symbols of royalty and send him out, a citizen king of a square mile, to meet the anointed king of England. This old London pride was, I suppose, dead by the time of Elizabeth and soured by snobbery in the days of the Georges. For

the first time in the history of London the Lord Mayor became a humorous, rather vulgar figure lolling back on his plush cushions, full, so the rabble believed, of turtle soup, flushed, so they would have sworn, with wine.

I do not suppose that to-day anyone who watches the Lord Mayor of London ride in ancient state to take the oath before His Majesty's judges is sensible of any pride in the

occasion. London is perhaps too big to inspire that tribal loyalty which men feel for something that is small and in danger of being assaulted. London is to her millions a secure monster: she spreads an illusion of permanence.

Still, to me, the Lord Mayor's "riding" is one of the splendid sights of London. I can never abandon a rather childish gasp of delight when the big gold coach swings along on its cee-springs, for, to me, Georgian as it is, it seems to swing out from those Middle Ages when the Lord Mayor, entrenched behind charters, was the managing director of the London destiny.

There is in the Lord Mayor's Show that continuity which justifies all pageantry, making a

coachman with powdered hair and the man who bears the great state Sword, not anachronisms among the motor cars but something suspiciously like family portraits come to life. . . .

Listen! The belfries of the city churches strike out peal after peal! Bow Bells are ringing! They peal and they clash together in a most exciting way. The windows fill with the faces of clerks and typists. A clock strikes twelve!

The mounted policemen, four abreast, move off. The first street follows them, then the second, then the third, then the fourth till the Bank is enjoying the pageant while Basinghall Street has not seen a sign of its tail!

Up to the great doorway of the Guildhall goes the State coach with its Cipriani panels and the six mettlesome stallions. The footmen descend and stand waiting. The famous Lord Mayor's Coachman, plump and pink, sits with his three-cornered hat on a brindle wig, holding the ribbons, holding the favored whip, sunk, it seems, not on a coach seat so much as on a great woolsack.

Into the daylight comes the Lord Mayor of London, with the Sword borne on one side of him and the Mace on the other. He wears his velvet cap and his gold chain and his long State gown.

The footmen open the encrusted gold door and let down the steps. The Lord Mayor mounts into the swaying ark, the Sword goes in after him, the Mace follows; the plump dignitary whip up his steeds and the coach moves off, the Sword of London out of one window, the Mace out of the other and the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor reclining on the cushions like a king. The cavalry escort wheels into position before and behind the coach and the procession is complete.

"Hurrah!" shout the crowds with just a tinge of Georgian laughter in their voices.

But the children of London! They look at all this with the eyes of the Middle Ages: they alone see Lord Mayor's Show as it should be seen; they alone see a powerful prince out of some old fairy tale riding in his triumph with the power of life and death in his State sword and all the might and majesty of life in his mace!

The great colored snake winds itself through the streets of London, a shadow moving through shadows; a shadowy mediæval show threading its way through the shadowy lanes which were rebuilt after the Great Fire: and in it something so splendidly Londonish, so magnificently and blatantly Conservative; something which seems

to say, "The past and the present are one and the future is built on both . . . behold the Lord Mayor of London in state on his way to the King's judges!"

II

JUST once a year the British nation shows its heart in public: this lovely, brave thing, the heart. It is Armistice Day, November 11th.

I look down on Whitehall from a window in the Home Office as a sharp, eager morning is warming towards noon. From behind the Houses of Parliament the sun, flooding Whitehall, turns the Cenotaph into a great sundial whose narrowing shadow is flung towards Charing Cross. The new flags move in a slight wind.

And Whitehall is silent. How strange this crowd is; this vast, still, silent gathering on Armistice Day waiting, as if in a cathedral!

The sun floods a thousand faces, and I pick out here and there women wearing the Mons Medal, men who have put on creased khaki for to-day, old women whose decorations tell their story. They stand looking towards that place where, centered in a square of troops, this hallowed monument rises, washed by sun.

All other crowds in this city of crowds have a voice: the Cenotaph crowd has a heart. It is the one crowd of the year absolved from curiosity, purged of the vulgarity of a crowd; a gathering bound together by the bitter-sweetness of remembered things.

It seems that here in modern England is repeated one of those events in olden times when a whole nation, in thanksgiving or in supplication, met round its altars. Now and again the hum of London reaches us from Charing Cross; and the clock moves on.

A gold cross, a surpliced choir, the clergy. They walk slowly to their places in the heart of the square. The grey-coated Guards, the

marines, the sailors, and the Air Force stand still as granite statues.

There is no word of command, no sharp compliment of steel, no cheers from the crowd as the King, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and Prince Arthur of Connaught walk to the Cenotaph bearing wreaths.

They salute and stand back, waiting. The clock moves on. The Cabinet, high officers of the Navy, the Army, and the Air Force, Ambassadors and men representing the Dominions overseas, stand at their allotted places with bowed heads, waiting.

Then comes the deep note of a bell; the sound of a gun, a sharp command and a rattle of bayonets as the troops spring to attention. In one sweeping movement the vast crowd is bareheaded; the King, his sons, his officers of State, his generals, all are bareheaded. The Two Minutes' Silence begins. . . .

Now London is hushed. The roar from Charing Cross dies away. Only the jingle of a horse's bit breaks the silence of a people frozen in memory. Three white gulls fly over from the Thames, circle above the Cenotaph, and go. In Whitehall you *feel* the silence and the prayer; for men and women are praying. It is not right to look. It is too sacred. The old

memories well up in the heart, the old aches, the great joys, the misery, the gallantry, the laughter, and the tears.

How long two minutes can be! How much can be remembered! How little can a few years touch those things that go right down into the heart. I would not dare to look into a woman's mind at this time—those women with medals! I would not care to imagine their thoughts; but the young men—ah! in two minutes how many voices call to us, how many faces we remember, how many friendships, how many are the splendid loyalties of those "unhappy far-off things. . . ."

The crowd relaxes. It is over. Sharp and clear sounds the Last Post, tugging at the heart with its memories of those old times, at the end of day, with night over a camp. Now the Réveillé, clear and stirring, a thing of morning memories, of dawn and new endeavor.

A moment's pause and the King salutes and goes. The square of men that represents the Empire breaks and goes; and now, with an eager surging movement, a wave of flowers comes towards the Cenotaph, first a file of blinded men, very straight and tapping with their sticks, their poor, seared faces lifted in the sun.

So it goes on: women and men with flowers, and rising from the mass of tribute is the scarlet omnibus that once tore into Antwerp with its khaki crew.

"Old Bill!"

One reads the name on it with something like a catch in the throat. Bravely "Old Bill" goes past. Behind are girls in their old war uniforms, soldiers, sailors, officers, and men marching shoulder to shoulder, and all down the line those women, old and young, with something glittering and colored across their breasts. . . .

Just once a year the British nation shows its heart in public; this lovely, brave thing, the heart.

III

Fog.

You awaken in the morning to a melon-tinted gloom. It seems to you that sounds outside are muffled: there is a stillness over the hidden city.

"A London 'particular'!" they tell you.

You look through the windows and see a yellow curtain of fog. The trees in the square twenty yards off are invisible; the steps of your house fade off and vanish in the murky mystery. It is as though London, and everything in it,

has sunk to the depths of a yellow sea where no wind blows.

London becomes a city of the dead. The great pulse of traffic ceases to beat; lost stragglers wander through silent, shrouded avenues alive with eerie, cloudlike banks in the red hue of the street lamps. Men shout out into the heart of the damp darkness, "Where am I?" Sometimes a policeman looms up before them holding a lamp like a pin's point of light. He guides them, as blind men are guided, across the road. More often the cries of lost people are unanswered, for London is a desolate place of awful gloom.

Hour by hour the fog thickens. The blinded traffic attempts to crawl through the darkness. Headlights are useless. For a time there is an inferno of motor horns. They shrill out on every hand. Omnibus drivers carry on till the curbstones become invisible; then they park their vehicles, and with their withdrawal falls the great silence of a London fog.

It is eerie, mysterious. The stranger in his first fog finds thrills innumerable; the Londoner, hate it as he does, cannot deny that there is a childlike joy in the sudden dislocation of routine, the astonishing realization that the other

side of the road is an adventure and a peril. . . .

You go out into the fog. Vague, half-seen shadows pass you on a cold breath. So ghosts must drift in the shadows of the underworld.

Sometimes, most astonishingly, a fellow creature appears before you with the suddenness of an apparition, every feature clear; and in a flash —he is gone! Murky tangerine-colored lights crawl in the fog; a man passes carrying a

Chinese lantern, behind him six or seven others following in his footsteps.

The wanderer is conscious of a quaint Puckish spirit in the fog. It tries to trip him up, to deceive him, to lead him on, and then to clear away and say, "Here you are, my friend. This is Trafalgar Square!"

It is a fog of changing, drifting patches. A hundred yards of baffling mystery, twenty yards of semiclarity—just sufficient to give a man his bearings—and then a long tunnel of pitch-black misery in which people run together in collision, walk into buildings, and become the playthings of this yellow imp of mischief.

Piccadilly Circus, the brightest spot in London, is blotted out. The whirling maze of electric signs is invisible from the Criterion side of the circus. As you step into the deserted roadway and walk towards the fountain a faint golden glow is visible. From the fountain itself it is seen that the lights of London are carrying on as usual in red and green and gold.

Common things are given a strange dramatic value. In a dense gloom you enter a group of men and women who are standing on the edge of the pavement looking out into the darkness. Something has happened out there in the unfathomable mystery of the next few yards.

"What's happened?" you ask one of the ghosts.

"C'llision!" replies the ghost, hunching his shoulders and turning a pinched cold face to the blankness.

A collision! You look out and discern shadowy forms moving, titanic in the fog, like giants. Angry voices say things that prove the human origin of all these legendary shapes.

"Oughter be locked up!"

"Right on the wrong side, he was!"

"Serve 'im right! Ruddy fool!"

You see the black silhouette of a policeman holding his notebook two inches from a saffron-colored headlight; other silhouettes blunder in the reddish moon of fog. A vast outline lurches past; and there is an outcry! The outline stops! Another one, tall as a tower, joins the group! They are like clumsy prehistoric monsters blinded, groping their way through the horrors of some natural calamity. They are omnibuses led by men with invisible lanterns.

The whole of London is some crazy nightmare. In the evening newspapers you read that a professor has been weighing the tons of soot and coal dust that compose a London "particular." He prophesies that a wind will spring

up and blow away these tons of suspended particles and give London back her eyes.

And so it is! In the morning there is a clear, cold, lemon-colored sky; and the sparrows chirp on the trees.

DECEMBER: *Covent Garden sprouts mistletoe—you visit the Post Office and—you say farewell to the London Year.*

TOWER BRIDGE

DECEMBER

I

NOW is the time to see Covent Garden just off the Strand, this astonishing market which seems too small to provide London with fruit, flowers, and vegetables. Christmas dawns there before it comes into the home in spiky pyramids of holly and sage-green forests of mistletoe sprinkled with its cloudy, significant globes.

A pink jelly of crushed holly berries lies in the road; a clutter of carts, wagons, lorries stand chock-a-block in side streets; men like the woods of Birnam walk covered in feathers, spruce trees, and, overflowing to the pavement —glorious masses of color—are oranges from Spain, big, yellow grapefruit from Cuba, apples from Canada, and tangerines in silver coats.

It is 11 a. m. Half Covent Garden has finished a day's work that began before dawn, when carts trundled over Waterloo and Blackfriars bridges with the mud of country lanes over them and green things piled high. No wonder a human boy who has been decanting

cabbages since dawn feels like flinging an occasional potato at people who calmly saunter through Covent Garden near noon with the shaving powder still round their ears!

All kinds of Christmas shopping is going on. Three pretty nurses from a hospital are bargaining with a rough, six-foot merchant in evergreen for sprays of laurel to decorate a ward. Delightful to watch how they demolish him, bring down his prices—all melting eye work! They coyly approach his mistletoe. They smile and blush. He puts up a show of resistance. No; it's less than cost price! Impossible! He feels himself giving way, and becomes technical in a last effort to save himself, talking of transport and the cost of labor. There is a soft, appealing look from a pair of Irish eyes; two grey, enchanted eyes.

"Oh, but think of our children in the hospital!"

He gives in!

"Three nice ones they are, Bill!" he shouts as the nurses go away festooned like three ancient priestesses. "I shall soon be broke at this rate. If any more come along you can have 'em!"

In the market proper, sleuths from big hotels rub shoulders with men from barrows. The

sleuths, perhaps, want peaches for some expensive pale lady; the men want boxes of dates to wheel through London.

Wholesale men go off with quantities of fruit that will find its way to the tables of millions of Londoners. Forlorn-looking trees are bought by the hundred, soon to be tricked out in a little brief beauty.

Turning a corner you meet a nun. She is carrying a basket in which dealers have dropped offerings. It is quite appropriate, this grave black and white sister in a place that used to be Convent Garden.

You look round at the clamor and the congestion. Two carters are quarreling over a

right of way. It is strange to know that once they cut salads here for the table of the Abbot of Westminster; difficult to picture them stooping over the beds in a quiet garden with Charing Cross a suburb and London far away on Ludgate Hill!

Strange, too, to realize that in all the change and flux of time the convent garden has not forgotten fruit and green things and flowers.

II

THERE is nothing more pathetic in London than the place in the General Post Office where all the presents that did not arrive in time for Christmas lie in awful chaos.

A walk through this hospital for injured gifts is heartrending. Nothing on earth can look more woebegone than a lost plum pudding from Australia, unless perhaps half an iced cake from Toronto. Every year thousands of plum puddings, cakes, turkeys, hares, toys, and incredible gifts which are none of these, lose labels and wrappings and end up in the G. P. O. Christmas hospital under the eye of an official who is a compromise between a detective and a first-class restorer.

See him examine each mince pie for some mark of identification. Each plum pudding that comes to him naked and in a state of nervous collapse is tenderly looked over, prodded, and patted into shape, and all the time this patient man hopes against hope that some portion of its label still adheres to it or lies buried in its depths in order that he may justify his existence and send it on its way.

How his face lights up when a plateful of ruin is brought to him with an address in Upper Tooting sticking to it. Watch him take a sponge, wash pudding from the label, pat the remarkable mass into a rough dome shape, stick a bit of holly in it with a triumphant gesture and dispatch it to the department where such tragedies are rewrapped and readdressed.

It is no uncommon thing to see an official walk down a room as large as the Crystal Palace with the lid of a mince pie. He is trying to find the other half of it! Every lost Christmas present is treated with reverence. A rabbit with nothing on it except "Love from auntie" is enough to make six stern Post Office officials shake their heads in sorrow.

How marvelous are the things that come to the postal hospital. Lying together are lost turkeys and geese, apples, oranges, bird cages,

pairs of trousers, camisoles, bags of nuts and astonishing omelettes caused by the sudden fusion of puddings, cakes, mince pies, with a top-dressing of Brazil nuts.

You cannot fail to observe an overcoat on which has accumulated a kind of plaster composed of Christmas puddings and crushed oranges. By far the most dramatic patient in the hospital is a silk hat of considerable experience which advertises the fact that it contained eggs almost as ancient as itself. A smell like slow music surrounds it. Officials hasten past it with averted eyes.

Who, you wonder, escaped receiving this on Christmas morn?

"What on earth do you do with lost presents?" you ask an official, who is thoughtfully excavating a mince pie from a gold dance slipper.

"We do all we can to trace the owner," he replies, "but if it is impossible—and just have a look round you!—we sell the articles. Perishable goods are sold almost as soon as we give up hope of identifying the person who has sent them or the person who should receive them."

"What incredible things people send through the post at Christmas time!"

"You're right. Nothing surprises us. Just look at this!"

He parts a brown paper wrapping and reveals two pounds of sausages and a pair of glass eyes. Nothing on them but "All the best. Love. Wilfrid."

Pathos, too, is to be met with in this home of lost parcels. Presents made by children in all parts of the world, little gifts of no value, but precious because of the care and pains taken in their manufacture, lie strewn over the trestle tables.

What sorrow the sight of this misdirected generosity would cause in hundreds of homes where people wait for the letter of thanks which never comes. . . .

* * *

And so the London Year is over. The varied cargo of twelve months is delivered; in the completed circle of the seasons a new January rides up over the horizon of the future; once again St. Paul's withdraws itself in mist as if in communion with Destiny. Then the diarist, opening his little book of memories, takes up a pen and writes the epitaph of the year:

"*Finis.*"

THE LONDON SEASON

THE events known as the London Season are among the most notable Social occasions in the world. The Season is considered to open in May with the Royal Academy and to close in July with Goodwood. The following brief notes on the origin of many of the most famous Annual fixtures may be interesting to those who do not know how or when they came into the Social Calendar:

MAY (1st Monday): *The Royal Academy opens.*

The Academy Dinner is held on the Saturday before the opening of the exhibition. The guests are restricted to those of "Elevated position, high rank, distinguished talents or known patrons of the arts." The Private View and the Academy Soirée are both fashionable functions. The Royal Academy of Arts was founded in 1768. Sir Joshua Reynolds was its first President.

MAY (last Wednesday or the first Wednes-

day in June): *The Derby, followed two days later by the Oaks.*

This National Outing and the most famous race in the world was instituted in 1780 after a dinner given by the twelfth Earl of Derby at his Epsom seat, Lamberts Oaks. The first Derby was won by Sir Charles Banbury's colt Diamed, May 4th, 1780. The race is open to three-year-old Colts and Fillies. The Course is one and a half miles long, and the stakes are valued at about £6,500. The Oaks is for three-year-old Fillies. The Derby was won by Iroquois, an American horse in 1881. The most comfortable way to go to the Derby is by the first-class "race specials" from Charing Cross Station; the most exciting way is to hire a car and go by road, starting no later than 8 A. M.

MAY: *Polo.*

The Champion Cup and the Inter-Regimental Tournament are played at Hurlingham, where the headquarters of the game are situated. Visitors can gain admittance by invitation or by a member's voucher. On certain days the public are admitted as advertised in the Press. Other famous Polo grounds are at Ranelagh and Roehampton.

MAY: *Chelsea Flower Show.*

The finest flower show in London held in the delightful grounds of the ancient Hospital at Chelsea in which live old soldiers. The Hospital is said to have been founded by Nell Gwynne in the reign of Charles II but "Evelyn's" Diary does not bear out this pretty legend.

MAY: *The Royal Tournament, Olympia.*

This famous show is produced by the Army Council and the profits go to a service charity. The actors are picked teams from the Navy, Army and the Royal Air Force.

JUNE: *Ascot Week.* A fortnight after the Derby, ending with Ascot Sunday on the River.

"Royal Ascot" marks the height of the Season. The first race at Ascot took place on August 11th, 1711, when Queen Anne offered a plate of 100 guineas to be "run for round the new heat on Ascot Common." It was won by the first Duke of St. Albans, the son of Charles II and Nell Gwynne. George IV instituted the Royal Procession up the Course in 1823. The chief day is Gold Cup Day, when the King and Queen usually drive in State attended by the Master and Huntsmen of the Royal Buck Hounds. Application for admission to the

Royal Enclosure is made direct to the Lord Chamberlain by letter. Special first-class race trains leave Waterloo Station for Ascot and there is a covered way from the Station to the race course.

JUNE 3RD: *The King's Birthday.*

"Trooping the Colour on the Horse Guards' Parade." This interesting ceremony dates from the 18th Century when the battalion finding the Guard for the Day trooped the colour which is to be carried on the King's Guard.

JUNE 4TH: *Speech Day at Eton.*

The 4th at Eton is the Birthday of George III, who took a keen interest in the school. The official functions are a Cricket Match lasting the whole day, speeches, and the procession of boats at night.

JUNE: *International Horse Show, Olympia.*

The best horse flesh in England is seen at this show. The jumping competitions, in which cavalry officers of every nation compete, are the great attraction.

JUNE: *The Lawn-tennis Championship meeting at Wimbledon.*

The last fortnight in June-July. Every year the competition for seats at this meeting

of the finest lawn-tennis players in the world becomes more acute.

JULY (beginning): *Henley Royal Regatta.* Started in the Spring of 1839 by a local solicitor.

The Universities, Eton College and several of the noted rowing clubs send crews to Henley. American University crews frequently take part in the races.

JULY: *Oxford and Cambridge Match at Lord's.* Three days.

The earliest record of this match was on the old Lord's ground in 1827.

JULY: *Eton and Harrow Match.* Two days.

The first Match between these two famous schools was held on August 2nd and 3rd, 1805, on the old Lord's ground, now Dorset Square. Lord Byron played in the Harrow Eleven.

JULY: *Gentlemen* v. *Players at Lord's.*

This is the most serious cricket event of the year.

JULY: *Goodwood.*

Held in the Duke of Richmond's Park near Chichester in Sussex. This fixture is regarded as the end of the London Season. Society

having finished with Goodwood goes on to Cowes and then to Scotland.

The "Little Season." This is the period between October and Christmas, when leisured people return from the moors of Scotland, when Parliament reassembles and the Court returns to London.

THE ROYAL COURTS

Two Royal Courts are held generally at Buckingham Palace before Easter and two after Easter, when ladies are presented to their Majesties. Men are presented at Levees held by the King alone at St. James's Palace. No man or woman can become a guest of royalty or is invited to meet royalty till he or she has been presented at Court. A young girl formally begins her social career when she has made her bow to the Throne.

The name of every "presented" person is written in the records of the Lord Chamberlain's Office in St. James's from which all royal invitations are issued. Practically every person who has been presented receives one Royal invitation a year.

Rules regulating attendance at Court are rigid. Each lady presented must be presented

by another lady of standing who is acquainted with her and is responsible for her character. All names of those anxious to attend a Court are carefully scrutinized and there have been instances when the privilege has not been granted. Men are in a like manner presented at Levees by men of standing who know them; the Lieutenant of a county can present a gentleman of his county, the colonel of a regiment his officers and so on.

Every Court sees the presentation of numerous women from other countries. Each year the wife of the American Ambassador presents a certain number of American women. Application for presentation at Court should be made to the American Embassy.

ENGLISH TITLES

American friends who have read this book in proof suggest that it would be interesting to explain briefly the puzzling question of English titles, their importance and origin. It is hardly possible for a stranger moving socially through the "Season" not to come up against several difficult problems, and it is a fact that even to English people the rules governing the

arrangement of the Peerage frequently present difficulties.

Titled Englishmen are of three orders: Peers, Baronets or Knights. The title of Peer and Baronet is handed on to the eldest son, but a knighthood lapses with the holder.

The Peerage is composed of five degrees of nobility in the following importance: Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts, Barons.

Dukes: First employed as a distinct grade in the reign of Edward III. A Duke should be addressed by the upper classes in conversation as "Duke" and by other classes as "Your Grace." Similarly an English Duchess is addressed as "Duchess" and "Your Grace."

The eldest son of a Duke is in courtesy "born in the degree of a Marquess." He generally takes his father's second title and is known as "The Marquess of ——." In conversation he is never addressed as "Marquess" but as "Lord Blank." His servants call him "My Lord."

A Duke's younger sons are born in the rank of Earls but they never take the title, simply putting the prefix of "Lord" to their Christian names. They should be referred to in conversation as, for instance, "Lord Alfred."

A Duke's daughters are born as Marchionesses but simply prefix "Lady" to their names.

Marquesses: Title dates from 1386. A Marquess is addressed as "Lord A."; his Marchioness as "Lady A." His eldest son is born an Earl; his younger sons are born Viscounts; his daughters Countesses. All should be addressed as "Lord A." or "Lady A."

Earls: This is a much older title than either Duke or Marquess. It can be traced back to Saxon times. An Earl should be addressed as "Lord A." in conversation, never as "Earl."

An Earl's oldest son is born a Viscount; younger sons are Barons but all daughters rank as Viscountesses. The title "Lord" and "Lady" should be used in conversation, never "Viscount" or "Viscountess."

Viscounts: The title was employed in France in feudal times but was not an English title until 1440. He should be addressed as "Lord" and his Viscountess as "Lady."

A Viscount's eldest son and all his daughters are born as a Baron and Baronesses and take the title of "Lord" and "Lady."

Barons: A very ancient title. A Baron is conventionally called "Lord." His eldest son was once a Knight Banneret, a title now obsolete, and nowadays he simply prefixes the words "The Honorable Charles So and So" to his name. He should never be referred to (except

through the post) as "the Honorable." He is plain "Mr. So and So." His daughter, "The Honorable Miss So and So," is in conversation simply, "Miss So and So."

Clergy: In the Church of England Bishops rank as Peers between Viscounts and Barons, and they, of course, sit in the House of Lords. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York should be addressed colloquially as "Your Grace" or "Archbishop" by the upper classes; and "Your Grace" by the clergy and all other classes. Bishops should be addressed as "My Lord" or simply "Bishop." A Dean is addressed as "Mr. Dean" or "Dean Blank" in conversation; an Archdeacon is addressed as "Archdeacon Blank"; a Canon as "Canon Blank."

Although the Archbishops and Bishops are addressed respectively as "Your Grace" and "My Lord," their wives take no title from the spiritual rank of their husbands: they are plain "Mrs. A.," "Mrs. B." or "Mrs. C."

BARONETS

This degree which carries with it the title "Sir" grew out of a lower division of the rank of Baron. "Sir Arthur Dash" is in conversa-

tion called "Sir Arthur," never "Sir Dash." His wife, however, is called "Lady Dash," never "Lady Arthur."

The eldest son of a Baronet is plain Mr. John Dash till his father dies, when the title descends to him and he becomes "Sir John Dash."

KNIGHTS

The rule of addressing knights is exactly the same as with Baronets.

A Knighthood is not handed down to a son as a baronetcy is handed down.

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